

# Contemporary democratic revolutions

There is a mood to sweep away the old centre left and centre right parties on the continent in a desperate bid to have something better. In the USA and the UK there is the wish to force change on the body politic by voting for Brexit and Donald Trump, within the traditional party structures. On both sides of the Atlantic and the Channel there is that same impatience with politics as it has been practised for the last twenty years, and anger at the way the governing corporate, civil service and Ministerial elites have behaved.

The anger is justified. The elites told us they knew best. They assured us they had the expertise. On the continent Tweedledum and Tweedledee parties alternated in government but little of substance changed. In the UK a puppet Parliament pretended to be in control whilst shovelling through thousands of pages of laws and many spending programmes that the EU required, with both parties claiming to support them without criticism or proper debate. In the UK we were made to live through the Exchange Rate Mechanism recession, the Banking Crash recession and the Euro crisis at one remove. The US was put through the Great Recession and the Iraq war. The Euro area had to endure the most economic pain with the ERM crash, the Banking Crash and the continuing Euro crisis.

People not very interested in politics, or pessimistic about their chances of changing anything for many years, have decided to take back control. In the USA Mr Trump first tossed aside all the serious professional well honed politicians of the Republican party to take their crown. He then went on to defeat the doyenne of political insiders, the darling of the elite, Hilary Clinton, who ran on a ticket of expertise and experience. The public said if it meant the expertise that had brought them the Great Recession and the Iraq war, they would rather try something new.

In the UK many groups of people with very varied political opinions united behind a campaign with the express slogan of Take Back Control. The more Remain paraded every great figure of the established governing and corporate bosses, the more the Leave case was supported. The experts who had led much of southern and western European economy into mass unemployment with their Euro currency were surprised when people did not believe their forecasts of gloom if the UK dared to vote Out. My belief Leave would win was strengthened at a big public meeting when many in the audience laughed and cried out their disbelief when the Project Fear forecasts were put before them.

If parties wish to run and support technocratic government it must at least be competent technocratic government. If they believe only they have the expertise to make the decisions and that the people just need bread and circuses, they must make sure everyone can afford the bread and get to the circus. The main reason the old establishment is being swept away is it failed to deliver.

Tomorrow I will look at the parlous light of the Conservative and Labour look alike parties on the continent.

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## **Security Council strongly condemns continued fighting in South Sudan**

11 February 2017 – The Security Council has strongly condemned continued fighting across South Sudan, particularly incidents in the country's Equatoria and Upper Nile regions, and called on all parties to cease hostilities immediately.

In a Press Statement issued overnight, the Council also condemned in the strongest terms all attacks directed against civilians and expressed serious concern, once again, about reports of killing of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of homes, ethnic violence, and looting of livestock and property.

The Council urged the Transitional Government of National Unity to take measures to ensure that those responsible for the attacks are held accountable, and expressed deep alarm that more than 84,000 individuals have fled South Sudan since the beginning of January and that many continue to be displaced internally.

The Council stressed that there is no military solution to the conflict, and in this regard, welcomed the continued and collective commitment in the search for lasting peace, security and stability expressed by the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the UN during the joint consultative meeting on South Sudan that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on January 29, 2017.

The Council expressed deep concern that the Transitional Government of National Unity is hindering the ability of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to carry out its mandate to protect civilians and create conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Council reminded the transitional government of its commitment in the September 4, 2016, Joint Communique to permit freedom of movement of UNMISS.

The Council reiterated that targeting civilians may constitute war crimes and those involved could be subject to sanctions under resolution 2206 (2015).

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## **DR Congo: UN mission strongly condemns**

## **persistent violence in Kasai Provinces**

11 February 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today expressed its concern about the persistent conflict in the Kasai provinces where violent atrocities are being committed by the Kamuina Nsapu militia.

The militia is recruiting and using child soldiers while targeting symbols and institutions of State authority, according to a news release issued by the UN Stabilisation Mission in the African country (MONUSCO), which also cited the disproportionate use of force by Government security forces known as FARDC in their response to the situation.

Particularly, since 9 February 2017, there have been ongoing clashes between Kamuina Nsapu militia and Congolese security forces within the area of Tshimbulu (160 Kilometers South East of Kananga) with unconfirmed reports of 30 to 50 deaths resulting from these clashes.

The news release stated that the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of MONUSCO, Maman S. Sidikou, strongly condemned the actions of the militia, and expressed his concern about repeated reports of the disproportionate use of force by the FARDC.

Mr. Sidikou expressed regret about the deaths and injuries suffered in these clashes and called upon the Congolese security forces to act in line with acceptable standards of national and international laws in their response to the situation. He offered the Mission's support to a credible investigation of this regrettable situation.

MONUSCO has deployed one of its mobile monitoring response team in the area covering Tshikapa, Dibaya, Bunkode, Tshimbulu and Luiza to possibly prevent, investigate and document human rights violations in line with its mandate.

MONUSCO redeployed most of its resources to the country's east in 2014. Given the improved security situation at the time, there was also a drastic reduction of military and civilian personnel affecting the Mission's presence in Kananga in central Kasai. However, since December 2016, MONUSCO has deployed a military company of soldiers in Kananga with the task of protecting the Mission's personnel and assets as well as protecting civilians.

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## **In Turkey, UN chief Guterres discusses**

# Syria, Iraq, Cyprus with President

11 February 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today met with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Istanbul to discuss the situations in Syria, Iraq and Cyprus.

Mr. Guterres is on his first major trip since taking the helm of the UN on 1 January, which will also take him to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Egypt as well as Germany.

According to a readout issued by the office of Mr. Guterres' spokesperson, the Secretary-General and the President discussed the Syrian conflict and the ongoing diplomatic efforts to end it.

The Secretary-General said he was grateful that the Astana conference was held in support of the Geneva process, the readout said.

The talks between the Syrian government and the opposition brokered by Russia and Turkey were held in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, on 23-24 January. The United Nations-facilitated intra-Syrian talks are scheduled to resume in Geneva on 20 February.

The Secretary-General underscored the need to fight terrorism and extremists in Syria but that effort would not be successful without a political solution supported by the people of country, the readout added.

On Iraq, the Secretary-General expressed the need that the on-going operations to liberate Mosul and other areas from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) not exacerbate sectarianism but instead be a symbol of national reconciliation.

The Secretary-General commended Turkey for its outstanding generosity in hosting millions of refugees from Syria and Iraq.

The two leaders also discussed the latest developments in the peace process in Cyprus, the readout said.

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## Surgeon performs country's first heart operation on AIDS patient

An AIDS patient suffering from a serious heart condition has undergone a successful surgery in Shanghai—the first of its kind in the country—and is about to be released from the hospital next week.

According to the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, the HIV-positive patient, identified as Mr Zhou, had been in critical condition due to a problem with a heart valve, and underwent the surgery at the center last month.

"It was China's first successful heart surgery on an HIV-positive patient," said Lu Hongzhou, the center's Party chief and an expert of HIV/AIDS.

The news has somewhat encouraged the HIV/AIDS community in China, where HIV-positive patients are always rejected for a surgery because of medical workers' worries of exposure to the virus.

"It's definitely encouraging," said a web user called Houde Zaixing. "When an HIV-positive person could be taken in by a top hospital for a surgery as a regular patient, I see some hope in this country."

China has an estimated 650,000 people living with HIV or AIDS. A plan released earlier this week by the State Council for prevention and treatment of the disease sets the goal that by 2020, 90 percent of the people with HIV or AIDS should be detected and 90 percent of those diagnosed should be receiving treatment.

Zhou, 58, started developing chest pain in late 2016. The symptoms worsened at night, along with shortness of breath, and he later started to cough blood.

A CT scan found he had calcification of an artery and doctors determined that surgery was the only way to correct it.

To ensure a smooth procedure, the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center organized a team of 40 workers from departments such as infectious disease, chest surgery, anesthesiology and medical care to give the patient round-the-clock intensive care.

On Jan 6, professor Sun Xiaoning from Zhongshan Hospital under Fudan University in Shanghai performed the surgery at the center's invitation. The patient's conditions started to stabilize after supportive treatments and anti-infection therapy for HIV/AIDS.

"There is an occupational risk when operating on HIV-positive patients," Sun said. "But our team was not afraid because of the full awareness of the disease, and it's a medical worker's obligation to give patients a new life."

Zhu Tongyu, a director of the center, said that for seven years his organization has offered a one-stop service for patients with HIV or AIDS, and AIDS patients can receive treatments including general surgery, orthopedics, urology, ophthalmology, oncology and gynecology, and obstetrics.