

HORN OF AFRICA REVIEW

This Update Covers the Period 1 March - 25 April 1996

The following is the first in a series of updates prepared by the UNDP Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia (UNDP/EUE) on the general situation in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Updates cover events in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda.

Information in this update has been obtained from UN, NGOs and media reports; reference is made to the sources as appropriate. No claims are made by the EUE as to the accuracy of these reports.

IGAD

At a meeting held in Addis Ababa on 9 April, the IGAD Executive Secretary, Dr. David Muduuli, briefed members of the UN Inter-agency Steering Committee on the series of meetings held in Nairobi at the end of March. According to Dr. Muduuli, both the ministerial and heads of state meetings were successful and resulted in a number of substantive decisions (outlined below).

The leaders of six countries of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) met in Nairobi on 21 March to discuss the revitalisation of IGADD and sub-regional cooperation. Among the areas agreed on by member states were a new name for the authority, to be called the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), reflecting an increased concern for development issues.

The new IGAD Charter for revitalised and expanded co-operation among the countries was agreed on by all countries except Somalia, whose membership is being held in abeyance.

Changes to the structure would allow a formal expansion of IGAD's role to include political issues, and a division would be established within the Secretariat to deal with peace, security and humanitarian affairs. In addition to humanitarian affairs, two other main divisions:

a) food security and environmental issues; b) economic cooperation (including trade, communications and infrastructure) would be established.

Membership to the new IGAD would also be open to other countries within the sub-region.

An IGAD ministerial meeting is scheduled to take place in Djibouti at the end of April. The meeting will be preceded by a technical gathering of experts to review and make final recommendations on administrative issues and refinements to the new IGAD structure.

DJIBOUTI

President Hassan Gouled Aptidon returned to Djibouti in March after a two-month stay in France for medical treatment, during which time in-country rivalry sharpened between supporters of his nephew Ismail Omar Gelleh and the supporters of cabinet Director Ismail Gedi Hared.

Gouled's return to Djibouti, his seemingly deteriorating health and the existing political hiatus have not done much to improve the general situation but have resulted in several actions: dismissal of three Issa officials and supporters of defense minister Ahmed Boulaleh Barreh and justice minister Moumin Bahdon Farah (both members of the ruling party and opposing of Ismail Omar Gelleh); the issuing of an internal memorandum by army chief of staff regarding the "eradication - in all zones - of movements and actions susceptible of threatening security" using "all necessary means"; and rising concern among the diplomatic community regarding the possibility of unplanned rivalry wars.

Growing uncertainty among the expatriate community has become even a reason to favour maintaining a strong military garrison in Djibouti for the time being.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 23 March)

The dismissal of three Issa officials by the Djiboutian President in early March has resulted in much discussion amongst the Issa community in Djibouti. Many are actively opposing the efforts of Ismail Omar Gelled and the Prime Minister (Barakat Gurad Hamadou) who seem to be trying to strengthen their position before the President's term comes to an end.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 9 March)

Following the dismissal of the two cabinet ministers in Djibouti, two versions of the Progres bulletin, the official organ of the government party, were published, each reflecting the views of one of the two groups moving for power. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 20 April)*

The Fronte pour la Restauration de l'Unite et de la Democratie (FRUD, the Afar movement) has joined the ranks of the official political parties in Djibouti, becoming the fourth legal group in the country.

The other political parties are Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progres (governmental) and two opposition parties Parti de Renouveau Democratique and Parti National Democratique.

Ibrahim Chehem Daoud, the former deputy secretary general for communications of FRUD has launched a new political military organisation called FRUD-Renaissance.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 March)

The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi paid a short visit to Djibouti. According to a press release issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, the main objective of the visit was to meet and discuss bilateral issues with the Djiboutian President, Hassad Gouled.

ERITREA

An Eritrean, Dr. Tekeste Ghebray has been named as the new Executive Secretary of of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. Dr. Tekeste is expected to assume his responsibilities in the near future.

In a press conference following talks with Egypt, Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Salleh blamed Eritrea for not co-operating with the countries that are trying to mediate in the dispute (between Yemen and Eritrea) over the Hanish islands in the Red Sea, saying "Eritrea is not serious in cooperating with mediation from Egypt and France."

The Yemeni president has, however, stated that he is willing to meet with his Eritrean counterpart in Egypt, once the two countries have reached preliminary agreements (*Nation, 1 April*)

In mid-March, Eritrean troops were reported to have moved several kilometres into Djibouti. The incident was, however, later denied by the officials from Eritrean president's office and the foreign ministry, who accused the media of fabricating unfounded news. (*Addis Tribune, 19 April*)

ETHIOPIA

A four-day peace and development conference of the Ethiopian Somali Regional State was held in Jigjiga between 10-13 March. The meeting, which was attended by representatives and elders from zones and weredas throughout the region, was organised primarily to discuss peace and security problems impeding regional progress and to consolidate mechanisms for the overall development of the region. Also emphasised by the meeting was the relationship between development endeavours in the region and security problems.

Particular emphasis was placed on the need for wider participation of women and members of all ethnic groups in infrastructural strengthening throughout the region.

On 25 March, thousands of people in Jigjiga and Degehabour districts of the Ethiopian Somali Region were reported to have held a peaceful demonstration in support of the recent peace and development congress.

In late March, the second conference of the Council for the Afar Region removed Hanfreh Ali Mirah, son of Ali Mirah and leader of one of the two factions in Afar Liberation Front (ALF), from chairmanship of the Council. Ismail Alisero, the chairman of the Afar People's Democratic Organisation, a formation linked to the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Front (EPRDF), was elected as the new chairman of the Council.

The conference is also reported to have made several decisions on administrative issues such as setting up a regional court of justice, recruiting and training police officers, and calling on organisations and individuals illegally holding firearms to surrender them to regional authorities.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter)

The office of the Prosecutor General of Ethiopia has filed charges against the three alleged terrorists who attempted to kill the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The Office of the Prosecutor has also referred all three cases to the Federal High Court in accordance with the criminal code of the country.

Court proceedings against high ranking members of Ethiopia's former Derg regime resumed on 4 April. The accused are the first group of defendants who have been officially charged by the Ethiopia Government. So far, five defendants have died since being detained in 1991, and 24, including ex-president Mengistu Haile-Mariam, are being tried in absentia. An estimated 3,000 mid-level and less senior officials who have been in detention for nearly five years have not yet been charged. (*Ethiopia Herald, 5 April*)

A meeting of African parliamentarians opened in Ethiopia on 6 April. Participants of the meeting jointly sponsored by the Africa Leadership Forum and the UN Economic Commission for Africa were gathered to discuss, among other issues, the role of parliamentarians, democratic sustenance and the challenges facing parliamentarians and civil institutions.

In March 1996 the US State Department issued the document "Ethiopia Human Rights Practices, 1995".

A joint \$25 billion UN initiative for Africa was launched on 15 March by the UN Secretary General in a live satellite link with senior UN, OAU and Government officials in Addis Ababa. Heads of other UN agencies, both at headquarter and subregional levels also participated in the launch through separate ceremonies. The initiative will begin with a year long mobilisation of political and resource support by all agencies in the UN system for the development of African countries.

The programme aims to greatly expand basic education and health care, promote peace and good governance, and improve water and food security. Most resources in the special initiative will be utilised through national programmes of action, locally defined and managed in collaboration with the international community.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa will be the lead agency in coordinating programmes in specific fields and will work together with UNDP, the World Bank and other UN agencies in strengthening the continent's capacity in the targeted programme areas.

The 6th meeting of the UN Inter-agency Task Force (UN-IATF) on African economic recovery and development will take place on 4 May. The meeting, which will be chaired by the UNECA Executive Secretary, Mr. K. Y. Amoako, will be a briefing session on the UN system-wide initiative. The meeting will also review the plans of action presented by different UN agencies on programmes for the first year of the special initiative.

The UNECA "Framework for Partnership" meeting took place in Addis Ababa 15-17 April, attended by senior UN officials and members of the donor community (the largest donor delegation comprised of 7 visiting officials from the Japanese Government).

The main objective of the meeting is to review the five main programme areas of the new ECA and possible donor collaboration. The programme areas to be discussed are:

- 1) Facilitating economic and social policy analysis;
- 2) Ensuring food security and sustainable developments;
- 3) Strengthening development management;
- 4) harnessing information for development;
- 5) Promoting regional cooperation and development.

Two other critical considerations that will cut across all five areas are: capacity building and gender equality.

The 22nd meeting of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa 6-8 May. Preceding this meeting will be the 17th Technical Preparatory Meeting of the Whole (TEPCOW) between 31 April and 3 May.

The Addis Ababa based UN-ECA Pan African Development Information System (PADIS) has been playing a leading role in the campaign to promote electronic networking for development and to bring Africa on the Information Highway.

As follow-up to the ECA conference on Telematics held in April 1995, the forthcoming conference of African ministers of economic and social development will review a draft plan of action prepared for the connectivity of Africa on the Highway.

A regional conference on public health in the Horn of Africa was held from 2-5 April in Addis Ababa to map out common strategies in the fight against communicable diseases rampant in the sub-region. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia in collaboration with the Directorate General for Development of Cooperation of Italy, World Health Organisation (WHO) and Institute Superiore di Sanita Italy.

The following are among the main issues discussed at the ministerial meeting: the role of public health issues in the IGADD sub-region, the need for technical cooperation among countries of the sub-region constraints restricting the full implementation of health systems, the need to strengthen and standardise health information systems, the need to provide health services in conflict and emergency situation and address the health needs of border populations.

(Ethiopian Herald, 3 April)

In a congress on 3 March, the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia elevated itself to a "front".

The Government of Canada has signed an agreement with the Organisation for African Unity allocating USD 2.51 million for the OAU Conflict Management Programme.

(Ethiopian Herald, 27 March)

KENYA

Representatives of the European Union in Nairobi have decided to introduce concrete benchmarks for continuing dialogue with the Kenyan Government on the democratic process in Kenya and preparations for the general elections in 1997. EU representatives would like to see changes to the laws covering public meetings, political parties, voter registration, preventive detention.

As a first step, positive meetings were reportedly held with the Kenyan Attorney-General on two recent media laws which the Kenyan media have strongly criticised. Meetings are also planned with the chairman of the national electoral commission regarding the 1997 electoral campaign.

Kenyan President, Daniel Arap Moi has named a new secretary general to the head the regional body East African Co-operation (Francis Muthauara, Kenya's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York).

Kenya will retain the chairmanship of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development for another year. This decision was made at the heads of state meeting of 21 March in Nairobi.

(IGAD Secretariat)

United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali is due to meet with the heads of all UN agencies in Nairobi between 28-29 April. The heads of about 40 specialised UN agencies are expected at this high level meeting.

A three-day national convention to address constitutional, legal and administrative reforms in Kenya has been scheduled for 29-31 May. The convention will be jointly organised by the Inter-Parties Committee of the National Alliance (IPC) and the Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change (CCC), who have appealed to all Kenyan to participate in the forthcoming event.

The Kenyan president's invitation for alliance to two opposing party leaders to abandon support of Richard Leakey and join him in the Kenya African National Union (KANU) was declined by Mwai Kibaki (Democratic Party) and Martin Shikuku (Forum for Democracy). Shikuku and Kibaki are the apex of the new opposition alliance launched against KANU, and together with Leakey, whose party Safina is the alliance secretariat, are known as the three "summiteers".

The alliance has been trying to publicise its policies and seek support but has been facing a number of problems, including their inability to attract undivided following. President Moi, on the other hand, has been noted to express optimism for an easy election as he feels that the opposition alliance against KANU is weakening. *(Africa Confidential, 15 March)*

SOMALIA

Two hostage incidents involving UN/NGO international staff occurred in Somalia during the second half of March. Although both crisis ended without harm to the staff concerned, the incidents have underscored the volatile situation in Somalia.

In mid-March, tension increased in South Mogadishu following clashes between militia groups allied to General Aideed and Osman Ato near the city.

Hundreds of residents in South Mogadishu participated in a peace rally on 29 March to appeal for an end to inter-fractional violence.

Fighting resumed in Southern Mogadishu on April 5 between supporters of Aideed and Osman Ato, resulting in the death of at least 75 people. Many civilians were caught in the cross-fire that broke out on the main road from Mogadishu to Afgoi (a town to the south-west). At least 35 civilians were killed and 15 wounded. All three hospitals in the Southern Mogadishu were forced to suspend work as a result of these clashes.

Five aid workers - an American, a Briton, a Sudanese, an Indian and a Nepalese - were kidnapped on 21 March from Balidogle airport, south-west of Mogadishu. The kidnapped UN personnel were later freed by Somali villagers.

In a press release issued in mid-March by the office of the OAU Secretary General, UN and NGOs were requested to increase humanitarian assistance to Somalia, which is facing a severe shortage of medical supplies and services, safe drinking water and food.

(Ethiopian Herald, 24 March)

The European Union's High Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino, was in North Mogadishu 5-6 April on a two day mission to review EU's assistance to Somalia.

A consultative conference was organised by the Southern Somali Alliance to discuss preparations for a future national reconciliation conference. This meeting, which took place on 31 March, was chaired by Ali Mahdi, self-proclaimed president of the Republic of Somalia.

The UN Security Council held a general meeting to exchange views on the situation in Somalia on 15 March, one year after the withdrawal of UNOSOM. A total of 29 speakers addressed the meeting, with several delegates stressing that the international community had not abandoned the country. Other delegates noted the continued hardships and fragile humanitarian situation prevailing in the country.

At its meeting 29 March in Rome, the UN Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group reviewed and adapted the report of the inter-agency mission that had been fielded to Somalia in February 1996. The findings and recommendations of the inter-agency mission to Somalia will be further reviewed during the next meeting of IASC, scheduled for 19 April in Geneva.

Broadcasts resumed in early April by the radio station controlled by Somali faction leader Mohamed Farah Aideed, and mostly used for military propaganda. (*Agence France Press*)

More fighting took place on 20 April between supporters of Aideed and Osman Atto, killing at least 21 people. Clashes between the rival groups took place on the parts of the former university compound in Southern Mogadishu. At least 200 families caught in the crossfire were forced to move to safer areas in the capital. (*Reuter News, 20 April*)

"Somaliland"

Somaliland President, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, has denied reports of a letter sent to the late Israeli Prime Minister, Yitsak Rabin, calling for military assistance from Israel. In a letter sent to the Indian Ocean Newsletter (who had previously printed copies of the alleged document received on a "Republic of Somaliland" note paper) the Somaliland President calls the letter "a malicious fabrication devoid of any relation to reality", and excludes all possibilities of turning to Israel for aid. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 17 March*)

An independent and neutral group of Somaliland intellectuals (the Peace Committee for Somaliland) are working with government and opposition parties for a peaceful solution to the problems in Northwest Somalia (Somaliland), with the objective of inter-clan reconciliation and preparing the groundwork for a national all-party peace conference.

The Peace Committee has been conducting missions to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian Somali Region and Somaliland since the end of November.

The Committee met with different Somali clan members in Addis Ababa in mid-March, during which time a "peace plan" was agreed on. From Addis Ababa, the Peace Committee proceeded to talks with clans in the Ethiopian Somali Region, and Government and opposition groups in Somaliland.

The March Addis Ababa meeting of the Peace Committee for Somaliland and members of the Garxajis and other Somali clans was followed immediately by the Conference of Somaliland Intellectuals Abroad, held in London at the end of March 1995. The London conference resulted in the agreement to establish the Council of Peace and Development for Somaliland and a general resolution for immediate action to terminate the civil strife devastating the sub-region

A Somaliland delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mohamed Abdi Dimbel) visited Addis Ababa 25-29 March at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government. The delegation met and

held discussions with the government officials (including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi), the OAU and various diplomatic missions.

SUDAN

The Sudanese parliament has elected Islamist leader Hassan Al-Turabi as new speaker - placing him back in public office after more than six years as an activist behind the scenes. The speakership in Sudan is probably the second most powerful position in the state after the presidency, and Turabi's election consecrates the close alliance between himself and Al Bashir.

Although in the absence of political parties all members of the Sudanese parliament stand as independents, most of them are sympathetic to the Islamist Government.

(Ethiopian Herald, March)

A Sudanese airliner with 40 passengers and crew was hijacked on 24 March during a scheduled domestic flight from Khartoum to Port Sudan. The two Sudanese hijackers of the airbus, which was returned to Sudan a day later, were reported to have been either members of the security forces or perhaps linked with the attempted coup d'etat.

According to the Eritrean Radio the plane was allowed to land in Asmara only after nearly running out of fuel. This is one of the several incidences linking the two countries after Eritrea broke diplomatic relations with Sudan in December 1994, accusing its Islamist-backed government of supporting Moslem fundamentalist guerrillas trying to destabilise Eritrea. This comes after the early March announcement of the Sudanese Government that they have stopped a coup attempt. *(Ethiopian News Agency, 27 March)*

On 26 April, the UN Security Council imposed economic, arms, aviation and diplomatic sanctions on Sudan until it extradites the three men suspected of the 1995 attempt on President Mubark's life in Ethiopia. The mandatory resolution (no. 1044), which takes effect on 10 May, is to be adhered to by all UN member countries under the provisions of chapter VII of the UN Charter. A two week grace period (up to 10 May) has been given to Sudan to comply with the council's extradition request.

American envoy to Sudan, Edward Genehm, however, has said that the US Government feels the present council resolution is inadequate and will not ensure stability and security in the region.

(Reuters-United Nations, April)

The UN Secretary General's special envoy, Under Secretary General Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, was in the Horn of Africa region between 18 February and 2 March to meet with governmental officials in the concerned countries in relation to the recent UN Security Council's resolution on Sudan.

In a communiqué at the beginning of March the UN Secretary-General stated that neighbouring countries are seriously concerned that Sudan is supporting terrorist involvement and is giving shelter to terrorist elements. Sudan, however, claims that it is the "victim of destabilising

activities encouraged and supported by its neighbours". It also continues to maintain that it does not have conclusive evidence to apprehend the three men suspected of the assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim met with President Omar Al-Bashir in mid-March, to warn him not to risk UN sanctions by protecting the three Egyptian fundamentalists accused of involvement in the assassination attempt on the President Mubarak. Earlier in the month the OAU Secretary-General described the situation with Sudan as being "... potentially explosive unless it is contained".

European Union representatives relaunched political dialogue with the Government of Sudan in early March. Officials stated that they hoped to finalise their talks before the 30 March UN Security Council deadline on Sudan regarding the three men suspected of assassinating the Egyptian President late June. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 March*)

Six weeks after American diplomats were pulled out of Khartoum, the US Ambassador returned to the capital at the end of March for talks with the Sudanese Government.

South Sudanese rebels waging a new offensive against government troops near the Ethiopian border are taking their drive to the north. SPLA forces have taken two government garrisons, Khour Yabus and Pachalla in the Upper Nile region in an offensive launched on 18 March. The garrisons are considered the main government stronghold along the Ethiopian border (500 kms south-east of Khartoum) and are known to hold large numbers of weaponry and heavy defence mechanisms.

John Garang, the SPLA leader who has fought Khartoum since 1983 has denied claims by Khartoum that Ethiopian troops had captured the garrisons and then handed them over to the SPLA, saying his movement received no aid from Addis Ababa. (*Al-Hayat, 22 March*)

According to Ugandan Ministry of Defense officials, Sudan launched a three day offensive on Uganda the southern bordering town of Kaya (in Sudan). The attacks, which were reported to have lasted three consecutive days starting from 8 April, have not been confirmed by any independent sources. (*Pan African News Agency*)

Since the capture of Pochala at the end of March, SPLF forces have continued to move northwards to Akobo. SPLA is now reported to control the whole length of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier, from Kenya in the South to Kurmuk (north of the Ethiopian town of Asosa in Benishangul Region), except for a small government garrison at Maiwut. Fighting continues around Nasir. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 13 April*)

Southern faction leaders that have broken away from Dr. John Garang's SPLA (the largest southern movement) met in Khartoum on 10 April to sign a "political charter" with the

government. The charter, which involves Dr. Riek Machar, leader of the SSIM, and Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, calls for a peaceful political solution to the 13-year conflict in southern Sudan. It forsee a referendum in the south after the establishment of peace and stability. This agreement is seen as a first step towards setting up a Southern administrative body which would be "autonomous within a confederal framework.

Opposition groups in Sudan have denounced the charter as being of little significance. Dr. Garang, the leader of SPLA, was not involved in this political agreement.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter & OLS Southern Sector)

UGANDA

The Christian fundamentalist rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony carried out a series of attacks on the military and civilians in March (resulting in a death toll of 239). Attacks on military barracks and villages are among the incidences carried out in northern Uganda since several hundred of the LRA militants crossed from camps in southern Sudan at the end of February. *(Nation, 1 April)*

The Presidential election in Uganda is set to take place on 9 May, and will be followed by parliamentary polls in June.

Campaigns by President Museveni and the other two candidates Dr. Ssemogerere (the main challenger) and Muhammed Maranja (an academic) were launched towards by the end of March.

President Museveni, who is facing his first election in 10 years, is under pressure to convince the Ugandan people that next month's polls will be free and fair. Opposition politicians, religious leaders and diplomats have been reported to say that the forthcoming elections appear likely to be inclined in favour of the current office. *(IRIN, Nairobi)*

The US State Department 1995 report on human rights in Uganda was released by the US Embassy in Kampala.

Rebels of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, a rebel group previously defeated by government forces, have resurfaced. According to a Ugandan army spokesperson, the rebels of the NALU are mobilising forces in Kasese area, west of Kampala.

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