

HORN OF AFRICA REVIEW

This Update Covers the Period 27 April - 26 May 1996

The following is the second 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

A meeting of the Technical Working Group of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa 10 - 15 June. This meeting is to be followed by consultations with the international partners on 15 June.

In a testimony before the United States African Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, John F. Hicks, Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), referred to the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative as "one of the Agency's most innovative efforts to do business differently and enhance our (U.S.) effectiveness.

Hicks further noted the different crisis threatening the region and reiterated the objectives of the GHAI to help countries move along a continuum from crisis to development (taking a holistic approach - addressing humanitarian needs, food security, population growth, income and private sector development, crisis management, health and education).

He placed great emphasis on the developments and initiatives taken by African leaders, particularly the presidents of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, in revitalising the regional institution,

the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in expanding its mandate and in prioritising conflict prevention. Also emphasised was the move by the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya to revive the East African Community, to forge greater economic co-operation within the region. (*USIS Addis Ababa Special Report - 3 May*)

DJIBOUTI

Tensions renewed between Djibouti and Eritrea at the end of April as a result of a frontier incident which allegedly involved the shelling of an unmanned Djiboutian border post by Eritrea (at Ras Dumeira in northern Djibouti).

Earlier in April, Eritrean Foreign Minister, Petros Solomon, is reported to have submitted a copy of the map of Djibouti to the Djiboutian President, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, together with a message from the President of Eritrea.

The message, which was perceived by the Djiboutians as "threatening", was followed by a meeting between President Gouled and the Eritrean Foreign Minister in order to avoid escalation of the situation into a diplomatic incident. During this meeting, the Djiboutian Government expressed its disapproval and requested an explanation of the Ras Dumeira incident. Eritrea, however, has denied the allegations regarding the incident on the northern frontier and claimed that the accusations are the result of moves by a faction within the Government, aimed at damaging relations between the two countries. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April*)

The Government of Djibouti retracted allegations made last month accusing Eritrea of launching attacks on the Eritrea-Djibouti border. The English language newspaper "Eritrea Profile" quoted the Djiboutian Foreign Minister (Mohamed Musa Chenem) as having denied any such attacks having taken place at Ras Dumeira. (*Monitor, 18 May*)

During a brief visit to Djibouti in mid-April, French co-operation minister, Jacques Godrain, discussed with the Djiboutian finance minister, Mohamed Ali Mohamed, about three issues of concern to the French authorities:

- 1) taxation of French technical assistants working in Djibouti;
- 2) pension remuneration to French nationals who have paid pension contributions in Djibouti;
- 3) a contractual agreement between Djibouti and a Swiss company and covering Djibouti custom services.

(*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 4 May*)

Former Djiboutian Justice Minister, Moumin Bahdon Farah and his allies in the Rassemblement Populaire pur le Progres (government party) who oppose Ismail Omar Gelleh (chef de cabinet to head of state Hassan Gouled Aptidon), have moved even further into dissidence, setting up a parliamentary opposition group called Groupe pour le Democratie et la Republique.

(*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April*)

ERITREA

Yemen and Eritrea signed an accord on 21 May, to resolve their dispute over the Red Sea islands of Hanish and formalising their acceptance of peaceful measures to decide the issue. The Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abdul Karim Al Iryani, was quoted to have said, before his departure to Paris, that "arbitration is the sure guarantee for security and stability in the Red Sea and safeguards international shipping in this sensitive area." (*Reuters, 20 May*)

Two communiqués (dated April 1996) from the Harakat Al Jihad Al Islami Al Eretri, or the Eritrea Jihad Movement, were issued on the Internet at the end of April by the American Islamic Group based in San Diego, California. Both messages referred to several military operations of the Eritrean fundamentalist movement against Eritrean government forces.

(*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 4 May*)

The U.S. President announced on 13 May the nomination of John F. Hicks, a member of the Senior Foreign Service, as the next U.S. ambassador to Eritrea. Hicks is a 22-year veteran of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and, since November 1993, has served as Assistant Administrator for USAID - responsible for programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

(USIS Addis Ababa, 20 May)

The financing of several major projects in Eritrea is under consideration. These include the construction of a new airport at Massawa (locally financed by an Eritrean company, but with additional support under negotiation); street repair work in the town of Massawa (contracted to a Chinese group); real estate projects in Massawa and Keren areas (carried out jointly by a South Korean company and the Housing Bank of Eritrea); rehabilitation of the Massawa Red Sea Hotel (locally financed and implemented by a Chinese company). A U.S. company has a project for a holiday village on the Dahlak Archipelago, including a sea water desalination plant and construction of a hotel complex (U.S. financing is expected to be between \$150-200 million).

Eritrean authorities are also looking to finance several other projects including: road rehabilitation and maintenance works on the Assab-Massawa and Keren-Barentu main roads; construction of a container terminal in Massawa port; and construction of a dam at Zula, south of Massawa (funding considered by Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) - the German parastatal organisation administering overseas development assistance. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April)*

ETHIOPIA

Court hearings of the officials of the Derg regime have been adjourned until 11 June. The decision to postpone the proceedings is the result of the prosecutor's request to file new charges against over 1,500 Derg officials.

Ethiopia has strongly opposed the imposition of diplomatic and travel sanctions on the Sudan by the U.N. Security Council, saying they would not be strong enough to compel the Sudanese government to observe the U.N. request regarding the three terrorists allegedly in Sudan. Ethiopia's stand in this regard was expressed in a speech delivered to the Security Council by its ambassador to the United Nations (H.E. Mulugeta Etefa). *(The Ethiopian Herald, 28 April)*

The fourth OAU/European Union consultative meeting took place in Addis Ababa 7-8 May. This purpose of the meeting, which is held bi-annually, was to review areas of co-operation between the OAU and the European Union. During the two-day meeting the efforts of the OAU in preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping were reviewed. Also discussed was the issue of conflict resolution and management and the support of the European Union to the OAU peace fund and the four projects submitted for EU assistance. *(The Ethiopian Herald, 9 May)*

A U.S. trade delegation visited Ethiopia 5-10 May to discuss the possibilities of investment in Ethiopia and the issue of consolidating the existing relationship between the U.S. and Ethiopian business communities. The mission, which comprised of 37 representatives of companies engaged in the agricultural and industrial sectors, transport, finance and insurance, met with

private enterprises and government officials as well as the Ethiopian president, Meles Zenawi, in a bid to promote business ties.

The trade mission had earlier visited Eritrea (30 April - 5 May) to discuss similar issues with the Eritrean Government.

The U.S. petroleum company, Petropros of Houston, has announced that it intends to invest between \$10-25 million in Ethiopia and Eritrea over the coming years. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April*)

A U.S. delegation, led by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Mr. John Deutch, made a brief visit to Ethiopia 17-19 April at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government. The mission is reported to have held discussions regarding global and African affairs with senior government officials. (*Seven Day Update, 29 April*)

Two meetings of: 1) the ECA Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW); and 2) the African ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning were held in Addis Ababa in early May. The meeting of the ministers of economic and social development and planning endorsed the \$25 billion development initiative for Africa launched by the United Nations in March 1996. The ministerial meeting made a series of recommendations including action plans to accelerate development in the continent, placing special emphasis on the utilisation of information technology. The meeting also endorsed the new strategic direction of ECA and the framework and action plan for its implementation.

Included among the recommendations of the final report of the 17th meeting of TEPCOW was a call for ECA involvement in a number of areas including capacity building, policy support, external debt negotiation and analysis of privatisation conditions. According to the report, ECA has in the past distanced itself from "its principal constituency - the member states".

The meetings, which were held under the general theme "African development and the ECA", welcomed the ECA Executive Secretary's proposal to establish a group of senior regional advisors on economic reforms in Africa. (*The Ethiopian Herald, 5 May; The Monitor, 9 May*)

The Government of Ethiopia has demanded the extradition of a former Ethiopian army captain, Solomon Kebede Tafesse, on charges of involvement in the attempted murder in Addis Ababa of a USAID official in January 1994. Tafesse, who is currently held by Ugandan authorities in Kampala on suspicion of contravening immigration regulation, has denied the allegations and is ready to surrender to U.S. authorities provided there was a "written and solemn undertaking" by the U.S. government not to extradite him to Ethiopia (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April 1996*)

President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China arrived in Addis Ababa (12 May) on a three-day official visit at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government. The visit is the first ever by a Chinese president and is expected to seal a bond for better relations between the two countries. (*The Ethiopian Herald, 12 May; Press Digest, 16 May*)

In a statement on the occasion of the celebration of the OAU Day (25 May), OAU Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim reflected on the progress of the continent in the area of economic co-operation and integration, but also noted the conflicts that have become the "centre stage of Africa's agenda", citing the experiences of the people of Burundi and Liberia as samples of the horrors of war that resurface. The OAU Secretary General's statement ended with a call for all African nations to show more compassion and solidarity in sheltering refugees.

(The Ethiopian Herald, 23 May)

On 7 May, the Council of Peoples' Representatives approved the appointment of the judges and magistrates of the Federal Supreme and Central High Court. The appointees, seven Federal Supreme and 23 Central High Court judges were nominated by the Council of Judiciary Administration and presented to the council of Peoples' Representatives by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. According to the Prime Minister, although efforts were made to nominate judges from the various regions and nationalities of Ethiopia, the composition remained unbalanced because of an absence of qualified judges in every group. *(Addis Zemen, 8 May)*

The Islamic Union group known as Al Itihad Al Islam is reported to have claimed responsibility for damages caused by the recent explosions at the Ghion Hotel in Addis Ababa, the Ras Hotel in Dire Dawa and also the death of Hayyelom Araya, head of operations of Ministry of Defence.

According to a report in the 5 May edition of The Christian Science Monitor (as quoted by Tobia Magazine, 16 May) in a statement given in Somalia, the organisation, which is also said to be active in the Ethiopian Somali Region, admitted to involvement in the aforementioned incidents.

(Tobia Magazine, 16 May; Seven Day Update, 20 May)

A group of Ethiopians residing in South Africa staged a peaceful demonstration in Johannesburg in protest against the decision of the South African Ministry of Interior demanding that the Ethiopians leave the country. Requests for reconsideration are being reviewed by the South African Government. *(Seven Day Update, 13 May)*

A \$3 million aid agreement was signed between the governments of Ethiopia and Finland at the end of a two-day Ethio-Finnish meeting on bilateral issues. The funds are expected to be used to finance the Phase II of the education sector development project of the Ministry of Education.

KENYA

The still-unregistered opposition party, Safina, has addressed a letter to Nairobi-based diplomatic missions of several European countries, Japan and the United States, calling on them to condemn the Kenyan government's unacceptance of opposition. The letter, signed by Richard Leakey, secretary general of Safina, was published 21 April. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 April)*

SOMALIA

On April 27, a faction of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Army (USC/SNA) which supports Osman Hassan Ali Atto (Aideed's former financial minister, now opposing him) decided on a programme to enforce the sharia (Islamic court and laws) in southern Mogadishu, where Aideed's forces are trying to impose control. A committee is to be nominated to prepare the installation of Islamic courts and an appeal has been issued to Islamic leaders to decide on the religious personalities most suited to head these courts. (Islamic courts are already in place in the northern part of Mogadishu controlled by Ali Mahdi Mohammed, Osman Atto's ally.)

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 4 May)

At least 11 people were killed and 23 wounded when fighting broke out in central Somalia between militia forces of Mohamed Farah Aideed and the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA). Fighting started on 12 May in the Dinsor district, 150 kilometres south-west of the town of Baidoa. Dinsor has been under Aideed's control since January 1996, when the RRA clan militia were driven out. *(The Ethiopian Herald, 7 May)*

The Somali clan faction supporting Osman Hassan Ali Atto ordered Abdulrahman Ahmed Ali Tuur, vice-president of Mohamed Aideed's United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA), to leave Mogadishu before 12 May. This is the first time a threat has been directed at a political supporter of Aideed in south Mogadishu since clashes began between his armed militia and those of Atto.

The order for Tuur to leave the capital comes in light of a recent interview in which he blamed Aideed's rival Osman Atto for continued fighting between the factions. A spokesman for Aideed described the interview as meaningless, warning that the security of such provocative elements would not be guaranteed in South Mogadishu.

Tuur, who once led the Somali National Movement in north and north-west Somalia and was the first president of the "Independent Republic of Somaliland" until 1993, has been supporting Aideed since April 1994 when he renounced the secession policy of "Somaliland" (then ruled by Mohamed Ibrahim Egal). *(The Ethiopian Herald, 7 May)*

A UNESCO Culture of Peace Meeting on Somalia is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa 8-10 June. The meeting will bring together Somali intellectuals and members of the international community.

Somali faction leader Mohamed Farah Aideed has requested UN and international relief organisations to limit their operations to areas under his control. A decree signed by Aideed on 12 May has indicated serious repercussions (confiscation of supplies) and imprisonment of relief workers who disregard the directive. This decree exempts the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Somali Red Crescent Society. *(Reuters, 14 May)*

The World Health Organisation has reported that Aideed's demands for taxes have halted its distribution of medical aid in south Mogadishu. According to WHO, as a result of these demands

shipments of urgently needed cholera vaccines and antibiotics were still waiting clearance in the Aideed-controlled port of Merca, 100 kilometres south of Mogadishu. *(Reuters, 16 May)*

"Somaliland"

Three aid workers captured on 9 May in the self-declared Republic of Somaliland were rescued after 10 days and flown to neighbouring Djibouti. The three - a German, a Briton and a Somali - were employees of the German aid agency GTZ.

According to aid officials, the aid workers were rescued by local inhabitants in Hared, 40 kilometres east of Erigabo (capital of Sanaag). *(Reuters, 20 May)*

SUDAN

Diplomatic sanctions against the Sudan government came into force on 10 May 1996, following Khartoum's failure to hand over the three men wanted for the assassination attempt against the Egyptian president. Sanctions, voted on by the U.N. Security Council, provide for travel restrictions affecting Sudanese officials, and cutbacks in the number and level of Sudanese diplomatic missions world-wide.

The resolution also calls on Khartoum to desist from supporting terrorism, a charge denied by Sudanese authorities. Sanctions may be strengthened at the end of two months if Sudan fails to comply with the resolution of the U.N. regarding the three terrorists.

Ethiopia has strongly objected to the mildness of UN sanctions against the Sudan (see Ethiopia section). *(SAPA, Agence France Press, 10 May)*

The Government of Sudan has expressed extreme surprise at the ratification of sanctions against Khartoum, calling the U.N. diplomatic sanctions unfair and unjustified, and saying that UN Security Council had been encouraged by certain member states to serve their political interests without considering the effects of such diplomatic sanctions on the security of Sudan and the future of the region. *(The Monitor, 30 April)*

Following implementation of U.N. sanction No. 1054 against the Sudan government, Britain ordered the expulsion of three Sudanese diplomats on 20 May for allegedly backing international terrorist groups.

Britain's move followed the expulsion by Washington on 10 May of one of Sudan's six diplomats accredited to the United States. Foreign Office officials in the U.S. said other western countries were expected to follow the U.S. and British lead. *(Reuters, 20 May)*

About 95 Sudanese military soldiers, imprisoned for the March 1996 coup d'etat attempt to oust the government of General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, took control of their prison after clashes with prison guards.

The jailed military officers and soldiers, on a hunger strike for several days, rebelled and broke into the ammunition stores of Al Duen prison (200 kilometres south of Khartoum) on 17 May, seriously wounding several prison officials. (*Al Ra'y Al Akhar, May 1996*)

The Sudanese authorities have suspended the independent newspaper Al Ra'y Al Akhar for two weeks on 20 May for its reports on alleged unrest at a prison in the south-western town of Dueim (see above).

The government-appointed Press and Publications Council said in a statement that the reports were "lies detrimental to national security". (*Reuters 20 May*)

The Sudanese Government and John Othow, the deputy leader of a dissident faction of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) signed a peace agreement in the capital Khartoum in mid-May. (*Reuters, 16 May*)

According to Radio France Internationale, the two main rebel movements in southern Sudan (Sudan People's Liberation Army headed by John Garang and the South Independent Movement led by John Lacke) have declared their readiness to join arms in the war against the Islamic government of Al Bashir.

Radio France Internationale quoted John Lacke as saying, "Consolidation with the Sudan People's Army on the merge is underway." (*The Ethiopian Herald, 28 April*)

UGANDA

On 14 May, the OAU announced its satisfaction with the fairness of Uganda's presidential elections earlier this month. The elections, which are the first in 16 years, re-elected Yoweri Museveni as head of state. A statement issued by the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa said an OAU observer team sent to Uganda to monitor the elections reported that "in the overwhelming majority of cases the election had been completed satisfactorily." Museveni was sworn in as president on 12 May in the presence of the heads of state of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. (*OAU Press Release, May 1996*)

Unemployed or inactive combatants of Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are believed to be behind armed attacks along several roads through Uganda's West Nile Province. Local authorities are blaming SPLA forces for several incidents in and around the town of Bibia, whereas authorities in eastern Uganda have reported assault rifles and arms changing hands among SPLA rebel elements. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, 4 May*)

Ugandan rebel forces belonging to Josph Kony's Lords Resistance Army (LRA), and other rebels in the West Nile Bank Front (WNBFB) headed by Juma Oris, have resumed anti-government operations in northern Uganda. Both rebel leaders are believed to have been previously based in Sudan.

The Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, has acknowledged that the LRA rebel leader, Joseph Kony, has been taking advantage of the weaknesses in the Ugandan military army, especially now that it has been slimmed down and reorganised. Museveni, however, maintains that there will be no negotiations with Kony, and he will have to be militarily defeated.

(New African, May 1996)

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