

HORN OF AFRICA REVIEW

This Update Covers the Period 20 JULY-30 AUGUST 1996

The following is the fourth 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

The Rwandan government has asked to join the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development - IGAD (currently comprised of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Somalia) and the East African Co-operation (comprised of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) in an effort to boost the country's economic recovery. The request was announced by the Rwandan President, Pasteur Bizimungu, at the end of a four day visit to Kampala in early August.

(IRIN, Nairobi, 12-18 August)

It is now anticipated that consultations will take place in Addis Ababa from 9 September to review and refine the project profiles previously presented to the donor community by IGAD. Participants will include members of the IGAD Secretariat, experts from IGAD member states and international partners.

A tentative date has also been set for the official launching of the revitalised IGAD, now expected to take place 25-26 November 1996 in Djibouti. *(United Nations, Addis Ababa, August)*

DJIBOUTI

Defectors from the Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progres (government party), who include several ex-ministers such as Moumin Bahdon Farah, Ahmed Bouleh Barreh, Ali Mahamade Houmed and Ismail Gedi Hared (former chef de cabinet) were called to stand trial before a magistrates court. The four former officials have been charged with offending President Gouled by drafting a communique criticising Gouled's policy. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 July)*

ERITREA

Tension on the border between Sudan and Eritrea has been rising with Sudanese rebel groups in Eritrea saying they are mounting attacks into eastern Sudan. Western diplomats meanwhile said Sudan's armed forces have received a number of helicopter gunships from Eastern Europe in the

last six months for use against rebel groups. An aid official in the region said the gunships were believed to be Ukrainian but diplomats could not confirm this.

A spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme said the agency had suspended its food aid operations in eastern Sudan from 8 July because of insecurity. *(Reuters, Asmara, 29 July)*

Discussions between Eritrea and Yemen to settle their territorial conflict over the Hanish Archipelago have been lengthy. Following the signing of an agreement by the two countries' foreign ministers (Paris, 21 May), a first round of discussions was held in the French capital at the beginning of July, followed by a second round on 18 July. From these meetings only a new time and place have been agreed on for continued negotiations; the delegations of Eritrea and Yemen are expected to resume talks in Paris 4-5 September. This rendezvous is very close to the 15 October deadline for setting up a special arbitration court. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 July)*

Meanwhile, the President of the UN Security Council has told Eritrea it should immediately withdraw its troops from the Hanish Islands. *(Reuters, United Nations, 7 August)*

President Issayas Afeworki of Eritrea arrived in Ethiopia on 27 August to hold discussions with Ethiopian government officials. *(The Ethiopian Herald, 28 August)*

The governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia have agreed to intensify economic, political, cultural and diplomatic co-operation. A joint communique issued by the fourth session of the Ethio-Eritrean joint ministerial commission expressed satisfaction on the progress made in implementation of economic, political and social agreements, and urged relevant authorities and institutions to increase efforts to expedite the implementation of all agreements. A unit is to be set up in each country to serve as focal points for co-operation. *(The Ethiopian Herald, 21 August)*

Quoting Sudanese sources, the latest issue of the Eritrean Liberation Front-Revolutionary Front (opposition party) newsletter has reported a new split in the Islamic Jihad (Islamic fundamentalist opposition party) headed by Abu Sihel. The split, which occurred along regional ethnic lines, has resulted in two sides: a sessionist group supported by the Eritrean lowlands population, and a group formed by the people of the highlands and the Keren area. *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 July)*

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian forces, supported by tanks, armoured vehicles and air support have attacked and occupied, on 8 August, the Somali border towns of Dolow, Luq, Bulohawo and Bohol Garas. The reports indicated that the hot pursuit was the result of extended fighting in the border area between the Ethiopian forces and Muslim fundamentalist guerrillas of the Al-Itihaad Al-Islam. The group is suspected of having bombed the Wabi Shebelle hotel in Addis Ababa on 6 August, and had already claimed responsibility for an attempt to assassinate the Ethiopian Minister of Transport and Telecommunication (Abdulmejid Hussein) in early July, as well as bombing in other hotels in the country. Reports reaching Nairobi said stray shells struck the Kenyan town of

Mandera, at the apex of the triangle where Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia met. (*Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 9-10 August*)

Ethiopian forces crossed the Somali border again on Saturday, 9 August, attacking bases manned by Ethiopian Somalis in the central Galgudud region, according to reports coming into Mogadishu over field radios operated by clan militia. Radio reports indicated that fighting continued into the next day. (*Agence France Presse, Mogadishu/Nairobi, 19 August*)

A statement issued by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 August said that a contingent of the Ethiopian defence forces had taken military action in hot pursuit of a multinational fundamentalists extremist group which for sometime has been engaged in terrorist activities along the Ethio-Somalia border and in other areas within Ethiopia.

The statement said a limited military counter-offensive launched by a contingent of the Ethiopian defence forces against the terrorist group on the night of August 8, and well into the following day, was essentially aimed at destroying the bases and sanctuaries of the multinational terrorist group, adding the operation was concluded after the objectives set for it were achieved. The spokesman said anti-aircraft and anti-tank rocket launchers were seized during the offensive, and gathered documents revealed the groups in Somalia were designed to destabilise not only Ethiopia but also other countries in the Horn of Africa (*Ethiopia News Agency, Addis Ababa & Reuters, Nairobi, 13 August & Statement of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*)

According to the Ethiopian Television (ETV) the Ethiopian Defense Force killed 232 fundamentalists and destroyed three military camps during its military operation in Somalia. The television, citing a government spokesman, said that several fundamentalists (supporters of the Al-Itihaad Al-Islam) were injured in the operation, about a dozen were taken prisoner.

(*Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 15 August*)

(*Ethiopian News Agency, Addis Ababa, 15 August*)

The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi will make an official visit to Japan on 17 September. During his four day visit, the Ethiopian premier is expected to meet with his Japanese counterpart Ryutaro Hashimoto and Emperor Akihito. (*Agence France Presse, Tokyo, 20 August*)

A news release from the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa has indicated that the US Government is granting 2.92 million dollars to the Organisation for African Unity in support of the OAU's Conflict Resolution Mechanism. The funds are especially earmarked for equipment and personnel focused on conflict prevention, management and resolution. (*USIS, Addis Ababa, 8 August*)

Unusually heavy rains have caused widespread flooding in the Awash river basin (Koka reservoir). Although accurate figures are not available, as many as 30,000 people may have been affected by these floods.

The Government of Ethiopia has set up a task force to coordinate relief efforts and preposition relief items. According to government sources, the situation is well in hand and an international appeal will not be launched at the present time. *(United Nations, Addis Ababa, August)*

The economic committee of the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) met in Addis Ababa 26 August to discuss African debt alleviation and agricultural development.

The two-day committee meeting also discussed the issue of African reform programmes, a subject which is also scheduled for in-depth review at the GCA annual conference in October 1996.

(The Ethiopian Herald, 25-27 August)

Two people were killed and 10 injured as a result of the 6 August bomb blast at the Addis Ababa Wabi Shebelle Hotel. The blast took place in the early evening near the main entrance of the hotel. *(Seven Day Update, 12 August)*

KENYA

The ruling Kenyan African National Union dismissed calls by opposition groups for an inter-party meeting to discuss the make-up of an electoral commission, saying they could only submit such a proposition to President Daniel arap Moi. Under the Kenyan constitution only the president can nominate members of an electoral commission. *(Daily Nation, Nairobi, 5 August)*

A UN relief flight from Burundi was turned back by Kenya on 6 August as part of the economic sanctions against the central African state. Economic sanctions were imposed against Burundi by the Governments of Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Cameroon and Zaire on 31 July, following the change of Government by the Tutsi-dominated army (supporters of the newly elected Tutsi president, Major Pierre Buyoya) a week earlier.

WFP Rome also indicated concern that East African sanctions against Burundi could stop relief food aid being delivered to hundreds of thousands people, exacerbating the emergency.

Requests by the UN for permission to dispatch food aid to more than 700,000 war refugees in Burundi were forwarded to the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. *(Reuters, Nairobi & Rome 31-6 August, 1996)*

SOMALIA

At least nine people were killed and another 12 wounded in renewed fighting between rival Somali factions. According to witnesses, clashes began on 28 July near Balidogle airport (90 kms south-west of Mogadishu), which Ali Mahdi forces had earlier claimed to have captured, but which the Aideed faction later recaptured on 26 July. *(Reuters, Mogadishu, 2 August)*

Somali warlord, Mohamed Farah Aided, who died from wounds sustained in factional fighting, was buried on Friday, 2 August near his home in southern Mogadishu at a ceremony attended by thousands of mourners. Shortly after his burial, his main rival Ali Mahdi Mohamed called an immediate cease-fire and said he was ready to improve dialogue with Aideed's successors.

Humanitarian sources in Nairobi said they feared Aideed's death could precipitate further violence, as his supporters sought to wreak revenge. At the same time, his death could remove a serious political obstacle to peace. (*Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 2 August*)

With the death of Somali faction leader Mohamed Farah Aideed as a result of wounds inflicted during inter-clan conflicts, Hussein Aideed was named his father's successor. Hussein Aideed, 31, who is a US citizen and ex-marine, was swiftly enlisted to fill in the vacuum left by the death of his father (1 August). (*Reuters, Mogadishu, 2 August*)

Opponents of slain Somali warlord Aideed said they had put their forces on alert after Aideed's son, Hussein Aideed, took over as his father's successor. Clan leaders, who had joined forces against Aideed, said his followers had thrown away a chance for peace by choosing his 31-year-old son to head the self-declared government, which is only recognised by Libya and Sudan. "We have put our forces on alert and Hussein will bear the consequences of his actions," said Ali Mahdi Mohamed, leader of opposing clan militia based in north Mogadishu.

In a radio contact with Nairobi, Osman Ali "Atto", another Aideed rival and ally of Ali Mahdi with forces in south Mogadishu, said the election of Hussein Aideed would further ignite the already complicated situation in Somalia.

In the aftermath of Aideed's death, Ali Mahdi had initially urged all factions to join peace talks, but with the new developments told reporters that ". . . unfortunately it is a lost opportunity (for peace)," indicating he and Osman "Atto" will now have to ". . . reconsider the unilateral cease fire that we recently adopted."

Hussein Aideed, addressing his first rally on 4 August, told an estimated 10,000 supporters that he would promise to lead them ". . . in the footsteps of Mohamed Farah Aideed." This "no change" message and the strong reaction of opposition leaders has dashed the thin hopes of some Somalis that Mohamed Farah Aideed's death may lead to a quick peace. (*Reuters, Mogadishu 5-6 August*)

UN Security Council members on 6 August urged factions in Somali to take advantage of the situation created by the death of warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed and declare a truce. According to the Council President, Tono Eitel, "they (the factions) were asked for a peaceful settlement to their conflict and to refrain from any action which might lead to a further worsening (of the situation)." Eitel said the Council would be discussing the issue of Somalia (closed session) on 13 August. (*Reuters, United Nations, 6 August*)

Asked to comment on the events in Somalia (relating to the death of Mohamed Farah Aideed) at the regular US State Department briefing on 2 August, spokesman Nicholas Burns called on all

factions "to exercise restraint and to end hostilities." Asked if the US would mount another diplomatic effort to bring the factions together in Somalia, Burns commented that ". . . the United States does not recognise any government in Somalia . . . However, Embassy officers . . . visit Mogadishu from time to time to have talks with the various factions," adding that "we've repeatedly urged a peaceful approach to problem-solving between the faction. . . Our (US Government) hope now is that it can be a more peaceful dialogue."

(USIA, Washington - USIS, Addis Ababa, 5 August, 1996)

The UN Security Council on Tuesday urged international compliance with a UN arms embargo (in place since January 1992) against Somalia amid reports that factional fighting had again broken out following the death of Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. Council president Tono Eitel of Germany said the Security Council reminded "all states, in particular neighbouring countries, of their obligation to implement fully the general and complete embargo imposed on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia." *(Agence France Presse, United Nations 13 August)*

A group of 10 Somali refugee representatives visited north-west Somalia on 14 August to review the start of a UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) programme to promote the voluntary repatriation of some 275,000 Somali refugees currently in Ethiopia. The group crossed Ethiopia's border town of Teferiber last Saturday and entered Somalia through Togwajale and to examine 10 potential returnee areas which have enjoyed relative peace and stability over the past 19 months. *(UNHCR press statement, Agence France Presse, Nairobi, 14 August)*

A Somali faction leader denied his forces fought alongside Ethiopian troops in a thrust into western Somalia to oust Moslem fundamentalists. Omar Haji Mohamed, a former general in the Somali army, who heads the Somali National Front of the Marexaan sub-clan, refused at a news conference, however, to condemn the Ethiopian incursion. *(Reuters, Mogadishu, 14 August)*

At least 14 people were killed in clan fighting between forces loyal to Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Hussein Aideed. Officials at three hospitals in Mogadishu said 22 people were wounded in fighting over control of Balad, a town 30 kms north of the capital. Aideed's radio station said Balad had been seized by his forces, but a spokesman for Ali Mahdi's alliance denied the report. *(The Ethiopian Herald, 13 August)*

International initiatives were underway to convene peace talks between warring Somali factions, but it appeared unlikely all factions would agree to sit round the same table, faction sources said Thursday.

South Mogadishu faction leader Osman Hassan Ali "Atto" is currently in the Yemeni capital Sanaa for preliminary talks on an Arab League proposal for a conference in Cairo, and north Mogadishu leader Ali Mahdi Mohamed is expected to join him there shortly.

The Ethiopian government has meanwhile issued invitations for factions to meet in Addis Ababa. Delegations representing both Ali Mahdi and south Mogadishu warlord Hussein Aidid were due to travel to the Ethiopian capital soon. An Aidid faction spokesman, however, has said that they were planning only to hold discussions with Ethiopian officials on the cross border attacks into Somalia by Ethiopian troops earlier this month. (*Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 29 August*)

SUDAN

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) accused, on 30 July, a Canadian company and its British financiers of colluding with the Government of Khartoum and has warned them to leave Southern Sudan. The SPLA believes that Khartoum is stealing oil and moving it by barges on the White Nile river. (*Reuters, Nairobi, 30 July*)

According to a UN Security Council source on 5 August, UNSC members were considering an air embargo against Sudan. The new mandatory sanctions (in addition to existing ones) would include a ban on international flights by Sudan Airways and other Sudanese government aircraft and closing the airline's offices abroad. A Security Council Committee would be set up to oversee the sanctions.

The Sudanese Government, however, has called the move by the UNSC as unfair and stated it wants to discuss outstanding problems (referring to UN sanctions imposed following the assassination attempt on the life of President Mubarak of Egypt). Sudan opposes the UN sanctions on the grounds that Ethiopia and Egypt have withheld information on the assassination attempt but has so far refused to hand over the alleged suspects.

(*Reuters, United Nations, 5 August & Nairobi 12 August; ENA, Addis Ababa, 15 August*)

Egypt reiterated on 6 August its strong refusal to impose tougher sanctions against Sudan, which has been facing UN diplomatic and travel sanctions for several months, but warned Khartoum it could not keep up this stance for long. An Egyptian Foreign Ministry official urged Sudan to fulfil the Security Council's resolutions so sanctions are not increased. (*Reuters, 6 August*)

The Government of Sudan gave approval, on 8 August, for the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) to undertake relief flights to Pochalla, a flood-stricken area on southern Sudan's eastern border with Ethiopia.

Following requests of the United Nations for clearance by the Sudanese Government, Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN, in letter to the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, reiterated that "the primary and main concern of my (the Sudanese) government is to ensure the safe and prompt provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected population of all the southern Sudanese citizens." OLS officials called this a welcome development, stating that relief assistance would start with an immediate assessment of the situation.

The first airlift of relief supplies to the affected population (reported to be between 15,000 - 25,000) began on 13 August, co-ordinated by the World Food Programme. Relief supplies would

include WFP relief food and medical supplies provided by UNICEF and Medecins sans Frontieres. *(UN-OLS Press Release, Nairobi, 9 August)*

Sudan, on 14 August, appealed for help to cope with floods that have left many homeless in central and southern Sudan. A statement carried by the government news agency Sudan News Agency (SUDA) called on relief organisations to help avoid epidemics, reporting that the Sudanese civil defence force was put on alert following the recent floods.

On 15 August, the Ministry of water resources warned of the possibility of further rises in the levels of both the Blue and White Niles. *(Reuters, Khartoum 14-15 August)*

The Zurich-based Christian Solidarity International has accused Sudan's National Islamic Front (NIF) Government of not only persecuting the country's Christians, but also waging war against a Muslim minority group. According to a report on Radio Deutsche Welle, two leading members of CSI, who briefed UN human rights investigators in Geneva, claimed to have witnessed oppression of the Muslim Beja tribe during a secret visit to northern Sudan earlier in August.

(The Ethiopian Herald, 10 August)

According to an official of the Sudanese army, Eritrean forces with armoured vehicles attacked the border town of Jabal Abu Qamal on 15 July. *(Foreign Report, 1 August)*

UGANDA

According to UNHCR Geneva, rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army killed 107 Sudanese refugees at a camp in northern Uganda, injuring many and destroying 350 huts and a health centre. The camp, which is home to 15,000, was attacked over a two day period by the LRA rebels. Many refugees fled the camps into the surrounding countryside during the attack.

A UNHCR official told Radio France International that in addition to the high death rate, UNHCR vehicles had been taken and their warehouses destroyed during the attacks. One World Food Programme driver was reported missing. *(West African 22-28 July & USIA, Geneva, 16 July)*

According to the state-owned newspaper "New Vision", on 4 August the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) had carried out a raid on an army unit in the northern village of Kilak, killing 24 civilians. The raid was said to have been an apparent attempt to recapture a strategic base lost to army troops in July. *(Reuters, Kampala, 28 July and 6 Aug & New Vision Newspaper, 6 August)*

Uganda has stepped up its fight against the Lord Resistance Army Christian rebels (supporters of Joseph Kony's LRA) with sweeping changes in top military ranks and increase defence spending.

President Museveni announced an extensive military shake-up, sacking eight top officers and rearranging 23 others, in a move to boost the fight against northern insurgents. The Finance Ministry also announced defence spending would rise to US 131.4 million dollars in the 1996/7 financial year - an increase of 6.9 percent. *(Reuters, 7 August)*

The Ugandan Parliament has ordered its select committee on defence and internal affairs to investigate insurgency by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) in the northern parts of the country and make recommendations on how to resolve the conflict. LRA rebels, although claiming they are fighting to overthrow the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, have killed hundreds of civilians this year. *(IRIN Nairobi, 12-18 August)*

Fresh doubts are being voiced about the credibility of Uganda's new parliament, following a statement by President Museveni's senior legal advisor denouncing the 27 June parliamentary elections as undemocratic. The criticism follows that of opposition leaders and is reported to be a further blow to an exercise already condemned as flawed. *(IRIN, Nairobi, 12-18 August)*

Baroness Lynda Chalker, British overseas aid minister, said on 7 August she was cancelling a trip to Burundi in line with sanctions imposed by East African regional leaders.

Chalker's announcement, on a stop over in Kampala during a regional visit, was the first sign of support for action against the military government of Buyoya from a member of the UN Security Council. *(Reuters, Kampala, 8 August)*

The Ugandan parliament has approved the request of President Museveni to increase the number of cabinet ministers from 21 to 25, and deputy ministers from 21 to 36. This change is intended to accommodate ethnic and religious balance. *(The West African, 15-21 July)*

A newly created rebel group, the Equatorial Nile People's Liberation Army (ENPLA), has appealed to the United Nations for the creation of safe havens for the indigenous people of Uganda's western region of Karamoja. The ENPLA has called on the people of the region to take up arms and fight for regional autonomy. *(IRIN, Nairobi, 12-18 August)*

Ugandan government troops battled rebels in a suburb of the main northern town of Gulu (a provincial capital 345 kms north of Kampala) following LRA attacks on a military post outside the town. There were no reports of casualties on either side. *(Reuters, Kampala, 14 August)*

The Ugandan National Task Force, (headed by Local Administration Minister, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali, and including several key personalities) which successfully ran President Museveni's re-election campaign, is now trying to transform itself into a new secretariat within the National Resistance Movement (governmental). *(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 July)*

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