

HORN OF AFRICA REVIEW

This Update Covers the Period 28 August - 23 September 1996

The following is the fifth 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.

REGIONAL ISSUES

Officials of seven African countries have agreed to ease sanctions imposed on Burundi to allow humanitarian aid to reach refugees. A meeting of representatives approved the partial easing of the trade ban to allow movement of humanitarian supplies to refugees in Burundi, but there was no formal statement. The meeting also agreed that essential supplies, including fuel, could be moved to diplomatic missions and other foreign organisations. Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Zaire and Zambia, the countries whose officials met in Arusha, have banned surface and air traffic with Burundi to back their demand for restoration of democratic rule.

(Reuter, Arusha Tanzania, 8 September)

Iran has denied Egyptian accusations that it was involved in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia last year. The official Iranian news agency IRNA has quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying, Iran "as a basic and unchanging principle has always condemned resorting to acts of terrorism". IRNA said Mohammadi was speaking in the Ugandan capital Kampala on Friday night, one of six African states that Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is visiting (including Uganda, Kenya and Sudan). It said Mohammadi was reacting to comments made by Osama El-Baz, senior political adviser to Mubarak, that Iran was involved in the assassination attempt. "An Egyptian terrorist group carried out this attempt with the help of the Sudanese and also Iranian governments," El-Baz told the Qatar News Agency. Egypt has accused Sudan of helping the gunmen who tried to kill Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Sudan denies this. *(Reuter, Nicosia, 7 September)*

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim said 11 September several African countries were ready to join an international intervention force in Burundi for humanitarian purposes if it becomes necessary. "In the event of a dramatic deterioration of the situation in Burundi, African countries are prepared to make their own contribution to a proposal now being considered by the UN for a multinational force of intervention for humanitarian purposes" he said. Salim was speaking in Bonn during a visit to Germany to seek support for African countries and the OAU.

(AP, Bonn, 11 September)

DJIBOUTI

Djibouti's 80-year-old president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon said on 5 September that he had no plans to step down as head of the state until 1999, and would head the ruling party until march 1997. This statement has ended months of speculation that Gouled was considering resignation due to age and medical reasons. President Gouled is currently in his sixth consecutive term and has been head of state since Djibouti's independence from France in 1977.

(The Ethiopian Herald, Addis Ababa, 6 September)

A high level delegation from Djibouti, led by prime Minister Barkat Gouled Hamada, arrived in Addis Ababa to take part in the Ethio-Djiboutian Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting, 9-11 September. The objective of this meeting was to review the implementation of socio-economic and political agreements between the two countries. The joint meeting was to also discuss the use of Djibouti port and road transport between the two countries. *(The Ethiopian Herald, Addis Ababa, 8 September)*

Members of the Djibouti opposition, including three ex-ministers and members of parliament, jailed on charges of insulting the President of Djibouti, have gone on a hunger strike.

(The Seven Day Update, Addis Ababa, 9 September & The Reporter, Addis Ababa, 2 September)

Foreign Minister, Mohamed Moussa Chehem, has recalled Djibouti's Ambassador to France on charges of poor financial management in the embassy in France. The Ambassador denies the allegations. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 September)*

ERITREA

President Issayas Afewroki of Eritrea left Ethiopia on 28 August, at the end of a two-day working visit to discuss bilateral issues with Ethiopian counterparts.

(The Ethiopian Herald, 29 August)

Eritrea told the UN on 28 August it had withdrawn its troops from a small Red Sea island in an effort to resolve its dispute with Yemen, a UN spokeswoman said. French diplomats confirmed that the withdrawal apparently had taken place.

According to a UN spokeswoman Sylvana Foa, Eritrean diplomats had given UN officials "verbal assurances that it had withdrawn." France, which was mediating the dispute, has said its envoys "saw no visible presence on the island." The UN has said that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali would inform Yemen accordingly. *(United Nations, 28 August)*

Eritrea has reportedly deployed a large number of armed troops on its border with Sudan, at Temarat, Gerger and Germayka areas. *(Tobia, Addis Ababa, 5 September)*

Eritrea and the OPEC Fund have signed a USD 5 million loan agreement for a power plant in Massawa. (*Africa Analysis, August 1996*)

The Eritrean Government is to put the new draft constitution to a popular opinion poll, both inside and outside the country. Paulos Baytai, a member of the constitutional commission's executive committee will be presenting the document to Eritreans outside the country, on a tour through Germany, Switzerland and France. Although the draft recognises the right of political parties to exist, it makes the exact terms of their creation subject to the parliament which will emerge from future elections.

At the present time, only the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (government party rising from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front) will be authorised.

(*The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 14 September*)

ETHIOPIA

U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, is to visit Ethiopia as part of a five-nation visit to Africa from 7-15 October. During his trip to Ethiopia, Christopher will meet with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other Ethiopian officials to discuss bilateral and regional issues. Christopher is also to meet and review U.S. support to conflict resolution efforts of the Organisation of African Unity with the organisation's Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim.

(*USIS, Special Report, 18 September*)

In a demonstration staged in Addis Ababa on 3 September, thousands of business owners demanded the lifting of the recent rent increase on commercial premises issued by the Addis Ababa Regional Council. The mass demonstration denounced the increase as unstudied and spontaneous, and failing to consider the paying capacity of traders and business men. The Council has rejected the accusations, stating that the new regulation would remain in place. A written appeal to the Office of the Prime Minister has also been rejected on the basis that regional governments have the right to lease, control, administer and set taxes on properties in the respective areas.

According to a BBC report, the police put the number of demonstrators at 150,000, while the organisers claimed a turn out of half a million (nearly 25% of the population of Addis Ababa).

(*The Ethiopian Herald, Addis Ababa, 4 September & The Addis Tribune, Addis Ababa, 6 September*)

Ethiopia and Djibouti have agreed to jointly combat a threat from a militant Somali Muslim group Ethiopia accuses of separatism. In a communique issued at the end of a joint ministerial commission meeting in Addis Ababa, Djibouti Prime Minister Barakat Gourad Hamadou and Ethiopian Defence Minister Tamrat Layne said the two countries would coordinate their efforts to combat "destabilising cross-border terrorism in the subregion." Sources at the three-day meeting between the two Horn of Africa nations said the reference was to Al-Itihad Al-Islam, or Islamic Unity, a Somali-based fundamentalist group. (*AP, Addis Ababa, 12 September*)

The Ethiopian Political Prisoner's Committee has reported that Muhyadin Muftah, deputy general secretary of the Afar rebel movement, Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) operating from Djibouti, was recently arrested on 23 August and secretly brought into Ethiopia.

According to Amnesty International, following a new security agreement between Djibouti and Eritrea, Aydrus Hussein, a former member of the Somali Regional Assembly and former regional commissioner in Degehabur town (Ethiopian Somali Region) was also arrested in Djibouti together with six Ethiopian Somali businessmen on 1 September. After a week in detention, the seven were reportedly handed over to the Ethiopian authorities. All were said to be supporters of the Ogaden National Liberation Front.

(Tobia, Addis Ababa, 29 August & Amnesty International, 17 September)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has asked the Ethiopian authorities for permission to see detained members of an armed Moslem fundamentalist movement, sources said here Tuesday. ICRC, however, has stated that it was "not in a position either to deny or confirm these reports". Other sources have said that the ICRC's request has not yet been answered.

According to a report carried by Agence France Presse, more than 10 Ethiopians have been killed in Somalia since the Ethiopian troops crossed the border in August to attack the bases manned by Al-Itihad Al-Islam, which carries out hit-and-run guerrilla raids inside Ethiopia. A spokesman for Ethiopians in Somalia, Mohamed Haji Abdurahman, has urged his compatriots to "minimize their movements within Somalia and prepare for an immediate evacuation". He did not say when the evacuation would take place or whether it would be undertaken by the Ethiopian government.

(AFP, Addis Ababa, 10 September)

Ethiopia has accused Egypt of flouting international law alleging it is planning secretly with Israel to divert the waters of the Nile. According to diplomatic sources, the Ethiopian foreign ministry has published a document denouncing Egypt for "a serious violation of international law" by proposing to divert water to the Sinai desert and allegedly to the autonomous Gaza Strip. The document aimed to counter Egyptian allegations that Addis Ababa was building dams on Nile tributaries "in collaboration with Israel,".

Ethiopia in June approved two dam projects on the Blue Nile and the upper Atbara river, which flows into the Nile, to be financed by the World Bank. But the plans have drawn protest from neighbouring Sudan which also shares the Nile waters under a series of accords saying it would have a "serious impact" on the countries through which the river flows.

An Egyptian water expert from the Egyptian National Committee of Irrigation and Drainage has, however, dismissed the reports from Ethiopia as "untrue", stating that "there is no attempt by Egypt to extend its water resources beyond its borders." *(AFP, Addis Ababa, 14 September)*

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi started a four-day visit to Japan on 17 September to meet business leaders in the western industrial centre of Osaka and explain the changing investment climate in Ethiopia. Speaking at a news conference in Tokyo, Meles said he planned to tell Japanese business leaders that Ethiopia was "back in business," having been helped by Japanese

and other foreign donors. The Ethiopian Prime Minister said Japanese companies which retreated from Ethiopia amid political turmoil in the 1970s, were returning for renewed investments.

Meles also said Ethiopia was overcoming a chronic food shortage, noting that it was no longer seeking food assistance. According to Meles, "Ethiopia, which has been the symbol of famine, will be able to feed itself and even to export food in a few years."

(AFP, Tokyo, 19 September)

An Ethiopian court has set the death penalty for three Egyptians tried for the attempted assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak. Three other Egyptians Islamic militants still wanted for the attack are said to be in neighbouring Sudan. *(AFP, addis Ababa, 20 September)*

KENYA

In the Eastern Province of Kenya, some farmers and agro-pastoralists are reportedly facing severer food shortages after the failure of the March-June rains. The Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture estimates that as many as 1.4 million people (30 percent of the population in the region) may require food aid if the situation does not improve. Widespread crop failure has also been reported in the semi-arid northern districts of the province, in Marsabit, Isiolo and lower Tharaka-Nithi in particular. Recent reports on the Ethiopian side indicate that a number of pastoralists have migrated into Ethiopia in search of grazing land and food. Although the migrating herdsmen (figured at about 8,000 - 10,000), who have left their families behind in Kenya, do not seem to have been severely malnourished as a result of the current drought, shelter and assistance has been provided to them and their livestock by their Ethiopian clan members.

(FEWS Kenya, Kenya Vulnerability Update, September & UNDP-EUE Addis Ababa, special report September 1996)

SOMALIA

A meeting on Somalia was held in the Yemeni capital of San'aa in early September. Participants of the meeting, which was facilitated by the Somali National Union, included Ali Mahdi Mohamed, leader of the Somali Salvation Army and Osman Hassan Ali "Atto", who heads a faction of the Somali National Congress/Somali National Army. A second meeting is expected to be held in San'aa before the end of September, to prepare for a peace and reconciliation conference in Mogadishu in October. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 September)*

Supporters have elected Somali faction leader Hussien Aideed as chairman of the Somali National Alliance (founded and led by his father Mohamed Faraf Aideed). Aideed, a former US marine who was elected on 28 August, has said that he would continue the struggle to unite Somalia's people and would defend the country from internal and external enemies bent on exploiting his father's death. *(Reuter, Mogadishu, 29 August)*

At a final condolence ceremony for Mohamed Farah Aideed, the newly elected USC/SNA clan leader, Hussein Aideed, pledged to disarm other militia operating in the country.

(The Monitor, Addis Ababa, 3 September)

According to the Arabic language daily Al-Hayat, Somali rival clan leader Ali Mahdi Mohamed has accused Sudan and Libya of direct involvement in the civil war in Somalia. Ali Mahdi, whose stronghold is northern Mogadishu, told the daily that "six Sudanese officers based in southern Mogadishu are serving as military advisors to Aideed's faction." He also charged that "the Libyan envoy in the south of Mogadishu, Mustafa Salem Al-Amouche, had encouraged General Aideed to launch a major offensive against Baidoa in September 1995." Ali Mahdi said that his faction had sent "messages to the Libyan and Sudanese government to ask them to withdraw their representative, but these governments paid no attention to our messages and chose instead to stir up tension among Somalis." (*Agence France Presse, Cairo, 5 September*)

Six unidentified gunmen have kidnapped a Life and Peace Institute representative, Hilal Mohamed Aden, from his home in north Mogadishu. Aden is the brother of Abduk Mohamed Aden Zebo, the highest ranking politician in the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), which opposes the presence of south Mogadishu strongman Hussein Aideed's USC/SNA faction militia in the Bay and Bakool regions of south-west Somalia of which Baidoa is the capital.

Unconfirmed reports said Aden was taken to Aideed-controlled south Mogadishu by the gunmen. No faction has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, which came two days after a USAID official was kidnapped in north Mogadishu.

(*Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 19 September*)

Gunmen freed, unharmed, a Somali U.N. aid worker in the Somali capital in early September, two days after kidnapping him from his home in southern Mogadishu.

(*Reuter, Nairobi, 7 September*)

The U.N World Food Programme has appealed for \$12 million in food aid for Somalia. According to WFP, "overall cereal production for this cropping season is estimated at 242,000 tonnes, 37 percent lower than the pre-war average (1982/88 average of 382,953 tonnes), and the worst in five years. WFP has requested donors to provide an initial \$12 million for food aid for "immediate emergency assistance" to vulnerable communities and for food-for-work projects geared toward flood protection and emergency prevention.

The WFP report said that in 1996 severe floods and drought in some parts of Somalia caused heavy crop losses - especially in the Lower and Middle Juba Valley, where entire communities planted two or three times without success. In urban areas of Somalia such as Mogadishu and Kismayu, the current harvest has started into filter to markets which should lower consumer prices. But, according to WFP, insecurity in Mogadishu continues to hinder relief agency efforts to monitor the trend of malnutrition among children. (*Reuter, Nairobi, 8 September*)

A senior official of Osman Hassan "Atto's" rebel faction of the USC/SNA, Abdi Abshir Kahie, was shot and killed in his home in southern Mogadishu. Kahie, a close relative and press officer of "Atto", was an outspoken critic of the Aideed government. (*AFP, Mogadishu, 22 September*)

SUDAN

Sudan and Iran have vowed to strengthen ties in the face of "enemy forces" which they said were trying to stir up trouble between Islamic countries. In a joint statement issued at the end of a visit by Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the two countries criticised double standards they said Western countries used at the United Nations to impose their values and culture on the Moslem world. Rafsanjani arrived in Sudan in early September, on a six-nation African tour.

(Reuter, Khartoum, 9 September)

Sudan and Uganda have announced a decision to restore diplomatic relations, having agreed not support rebel forces from their territories and to set up a monitoring team of foreign observers. Under the security clauses of an agreement between the two countries, the rebels, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan and the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, will no longer be able to take refuge on the other side of the border.

The agreement, brokered by the Iranian President, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, commits Sudan and Uganda to: stop immediately official propaganda campaigns against the other party; prevent any elements hostile to the other party from using its territory against the other; end direct or indirect assistance to hostile elements; destroy positions and centres of supplies for elements opposed to the other country; move all refugees and all elements hostile to the other party from the border to an area not less than 100 km (60 miles) inside the border; and encourage voluntary repatriation of refugees from the two countries.

As reported by the Sudanese state television, there would also be a "a control team" composed of representatives from Iran, Libya and Malawi, to investigate any alleged violations of the agreement. The three countries agreed to review progress of the agreement again during the U.N. General Assembly session on New York. The three countries, Sudan, Uganda and Iran, will also hold meetings every six months, alternating between the three capitals, to follow up the agreement. They will meet in Uganda in December to decide the terms of reference and the rights of the control team.

Uganda severed ties with Sudan in April 1995, accusing Al-Bashir's government of supporting LRA rebels in the north of the country.

(Reuter, Khartoum, 10 September & Press Release, Embassy of Sudan, Addis Ababa)

Following heavy rains and flooding in June in the Upper Nile and Jonglei states in the south-eastern part of the country, an international appeal was issued by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs for emergency relief. More than 18,500 people were reportedly in need of immediate assistance and 25,000 were at risk of malnutrition as a result of the flooding. The Sudanese Government reported that epidemics and shortages of drinking water, food and fuel are imminent. In response, the United Nations Development Programme has allocated USD 50,000 for coordination of relief assistance. *(UNDP, DPA-New York, 13 September)*

With a flight ban into Pochalla in southern Sudan, the United Nation's continues efforts to regain clearance into the area in order to provide flood victims with emergency supplies. Operation Lifeline Sudan was granted flight clearance in August for relief assistance but was denied access for the month of September, disrupting relief activities that followed the severe flooding. It is estimated that relief assistance will be needed until the end of 1996.

(OLS, Nairobi, Update 96/37, 17 September)

Rebels have been holding six Roman Catholic missionaries (three Australian nuns, one Sudanese priest, one US priest and one Italian brother) in south Sudan since 17 August. The Catholic Information Office in Nairobi said the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels were holding four in prison and two in a mission compound at Mapourdit in the south.

SPLA officials were not immediately available for comment, but the Catholic Information Office said the SPLA's Nairobi representation attributed the detentions to a local commander and the missionaries would be freed shortly. The six missionaries were released on 28 August, after 11 days in detention. It was reported that all were in good mental and physical condition, and the situation had returned to normal. Five of the six missionaries flew to Nairobi on 30 August.

(Reuter, 28 August, Nairobi & (Reuter, Nairobi, 28 & 29 August and Operation Lifeline Sudan, update 96/35)

Staff from Operation Lifeline Sudan NGOs in Akobo requested relocation on 2 September due to mounting tension and threats of fighting in the area. OLS staff have been advised to take security precautions until they are able to be relocated.

Three staff of the OLS NGO Medecins sans Frontieres-Belgium (MSF-Belgium) were relocated from Bararud on 12 September, on the advice of local counterparts, as a precautionary measure. The staff will return to Bararud as soon as possible to continue their health programmes.

Staff of the OLS NGOs Action Contre la Faim (ACF), VetAid and two WFP staff were relocated from Turalei to Lokichokio due to insecurity. In addition, two WFP staff, accompanied by their local counterparts, relocated from Thiek Thou on 16 September due to fighting near their location. *(OLS update, 96/35, 3 Sept. & 96/37, 17 Sept.)*

In a demonstration staged at the end of August, residents of Khartoum demanded the resignation of the government of General Al-Bashir. According to a report on Voice of Eritrea radio, the public rally was staged to protest a shortage of water and power supply in the capital city. A few days later, more protests broke out in and around the capital after bakeries refused to make bread due to strict government regulations on prices. These riots resulted in two deaths and seven injuries.

In an effort to calm the situation, General Hassan Al-Bashir removed 39 government ministers and 21 provincial governors.

(ENA, Addis Ababa, 29 August & Addis Tribune, Addis Ababa, 6 September)

Six armed Iraqis who hijacked a Sudanese aircraft carrying 199 passengers and crew, released their hostages at Stansted Airport near London. The aircraft, which had been routed from

Khartoum to Amman, was initially diverted to Cyprus for refueling. During the stop at Larnaca airport the hijackers had at one point threatened to blow up the jet.

(The Monitor, Addis Ababa, 29 August)

Traders warn that Sudan's 1996-97 harvest of sesame seed is set to slump to just 100,000-120,000 tonnes, due to shortages of fertiliser, equipment and hard currency. Exports will fall to only half the 70,000-80,000 recorded in 1995-96, when the total harvest was 180,000 tons.

Local traders point out that farmers' ability to produce efficiently has also been undermined by Khartoum's poor relations with donor countries such as the Britain, Germany and the United States, which used to contribute, fertiliser, machinery and inputs to Sudanese farmers.

(Africa Analysis, 6 September, 1996)

While reports from Egyptian diplomatic sources indicate that the important financier of fundamentalist Islamic groups worldwide, Ussman Bin Laden, recently returned to Sudan, information from Khartoum's secret service suggests the contrary and Bin Laden is still persona non grata in Sudan. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 14 September)*

UGANDA

Attacks of the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army continue in northern Uganda. According to the government-owned paper, New Vision, LRA fighters killed about 40 people in the suburbs of Gulu town. *(IRIN, Nairobi, Report No. 25, 2-8 September)*

Aktion Afrika Hilfe (AAH) has reported attacks on 13 and 15 September on the refugee camps Ikafa and Palorinya in northern Uganda. AAH also reported that some of the occupants of the camps, primarily southern Sudanese, have moved as a result of these attacks.

It is not clear where they have moved to and if they will return to the camps. Two water engineers contracted by AAH in the camps were beaten and one Ugandan soldier was killed during the 15 September attack on Palorinya. *(OLS, Nairobi, Update 96/37, 17 September)*

Uganda's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs responsible for international affairs, Martin Aliko and the UNDP Resident Representative in Kampala, Babatunde Thomas, travelled to Khartoum in early September as part of a mission to commence negotiations on normalising relations between Sudan and Uganda. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 September)*

The Ugandan government has worked out a USD 2.3 billion master plan to rehabilitate the country's road network over ten years. The study for this programme was carried out through World Bank financing. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 September)*

A World Bank consultative meeting on Uganda is expected to be held in Paris on 21 November. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 7 September)*

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