

HORN OF AFRICA REVIEW

This Update Covers the Period 24 September - 31 October 1996

The following is the sixth 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

Interested bilateral donors to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) met in Brussels in early October to discuss and reach common understanding on certain issues in assisting IGAD in moving forward. IGAD has posed a number of challenges to the donor community regarding coordination mechanisms, and including operational, policy and donor headquarters coordination - all of which were discussed as well as a strategic framework for cooperation, the issue of project and programme approaches and capacity building.

The official launch of IGAD's project profiles and presentation of the new mandate and programme priorities is now set to take place in Djibouti either 25 or 26 November.

(United Nation, Addis Ababa, 10 October)

Leaders of Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia, the prime ministers of Ethiopia and Zaire and the Secretary General of the Organisation for African unity met in Arusha, 8 October, under the umbrella of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee to review the sanctions placed on Burundi. The Arusha summit participants rejected a U.S. suggestion to ease sanctions on Burundi. Also present at the one day meeting were representatives of the United States and the European Union and

former Tanzanian President, Julius Nyrere, the international mediator on Burundi. Especially significant is the unyielding position of the Kenyan President against the lifting of sanctions as the key demands, for talks with the Hutus, made by regional states at the time of imposing the sanctions on 31 July, have not been met.

(IRIN, Nairobi, 29 September &

The East African, Nairobi 14-20 October)

A recent report issued by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations System (FAO) in preparation for the World Food Summit has indicated that Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia are among thirteen African countries that continue to require food assistance, despite relatively improved harvests.

(FAO, Rome, October 1996)

A regional conference on monetary policy in East Africa was scheduled to open in Nairobi on 13 October. The one-week meeting organised by the German Embassy and the Central Bank of Kenya was expected to focus on the problems hampering economic and monetary integration in Africa. Delegates were invited from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Ghana.

(The East African, Nairobi, 7-13 October)

DJIBOUTI

Djibouti Finance Minister, Mohamed Ali Mohamed, accompanied by the National Treasurer and Governor of the Banque Nationale de Djibouti, traveled to Washington for a renewed round of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund regarding the structural adjustment programme of Djibouti and credit facilitation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 5 October)

ERITREA

A five member arbitration panel is to be convened by April 1997 to decide on the territorial dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over the Red Sea Hanish islands. According to the Eritrean Foreign Minister, Petros Solomon, the agreement signed by the two countries in Paris on 3 October would set the deadline of the end of 1996 for nomination of panel members.

The Paris agreement also set out a detailed terms of reference and procedural issues for the tribunal, which would decide the sovereignty of the islands and maritime boundaries in the Red Sea.

*(The Monitor, Addis Ababa, 5-6 October &
Indian Ocean Newsletter, 5 October)*

Tarik, a private Ethiopian newspaper, has reported the Sudanese Minister of Defense, General Abdulrahman Ali, as accusing Eritrea of assisting a Sudanese group who unsuccessfully attempted last July to seize Port Sudan.

(Seven Day Update, Addis Ababa, 21 October)

The Eritrean Government has ordered a new round of compulsory military training for all army reservists. The move is attributed to regional tension caused by disputes with Sudan and Yemen.

(Africa Analysis, No 240, September)

The long stand-off between donors and Eritrea over a move to monetise food aid was broken with the signing of a \$20 million deal with USAID, providing the Eritrean Grain Board with 34,000 tons of wheat in 1996 and a further 52,000 tons (at current prices) in 1997 and 1998. Proceeds from the sale of the grain will fund construction of roads in the north and west of the country. The European Union, and other donors are, however, searching for a formula to satisfy their demands for accountability in food aid budgeting.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's former Defense Minister, Tamerat Layne, who was also Deputy Prime Minister, has been dismissed from both posts and replaced by Addis Ababa Mayor Teffera Walwa. The decision to dismiss the minister announced to the parliament on 24 October by Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, who told the parliament he had taken the decision with "great reluctance".

Tamerat was also dismissed from his post as Secretary-General of the Amhara National Democratic Movement - ANDM (previously the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement - EPDM), one of the main parties in the ruling front, for "indiscipline". In a statement read on national radio, the central committee of the ANDM stated that Tamerat (founder of the front) had failed to abide by the discipline expected of a combatant.

Tamerat was Prime Minister during the transitional period between 1991 and 1995 after the overthrow Mengistu Haile Mariam, and served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense after the 1995 elections.

(Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 25 October)

Anger over the Ethiopian government's decision to raise commercial rents in Addis Ababa provoked a demonstration by around 5,000 shop owners on 3 October, the second time in four weeks that traders had protested.

Many city shops and stalls remained close for most of the day. The first rallies took place on 3 September, when more than 10,000 people demonstrated against the raise in rent, which the Ethiopian Human Rights Council says have been increased 3,000 percent on average. Although the government has repeated that it will not revoke its decision, the shop owners continue to protest, and say the increase will ruin them.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said last week that the economy would be governed by free-market principles and "those who found the rent too high in the capital could go somewhere else, where it is more affordable." On 24 September, the opposition's principal organization, the Alternative Council of the Forces for Peace and Democracy, called for the population to put up "passive resistance" to protest against the increase, which it calls a "poorly judged and illegal".

(Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 3 October)

U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, visited Ethiopia 9-10 October, as part of a five-nation African tour (7-15 October) covering Mali, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Angola and South Africa. Among the major issues discussed by Christopher with the leading officials of the visited nations was the U.S. Government's proposal for a multi-national Crisis Response Force. Warren

Christopher also held talks with the Ethiopian Prime Minister and other officials on a variety of topics including Ethiopia's democratisation process, freedom of speech and human rights situation as well as regional issues of mutual concern.

Warren Christopher also received a report on the state of human rights and democratic transactions in Ethiopia from the Ethiopia Human Rights Council. The report is said to have been particularly critical of the government's economic policy.

(The Monitor, Addis Ababa, 10 October, The Ethiopian Herald 11 October, USIS Information Bulletins & Press Digest, 24 October)

The Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations have neither deliberated on nor sanctioned the proposal of establishing the crisis response force proposed by U.S. Secretary of State during his visit to Africa. Many African states have openly protested against the idea, although Ethiopia and Mali have both agreed on participation.

(Press Digest, Addis Ababa 24 October)

Ethiopia became the second African nation to agree to contribute troops to an African crisis intervention force. Speaking after talks with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Christopher said Ethiopia would contribute two battalions to the all-African force.

Mali on Monday, at the start of Christopher's five-nation tour, also agreed to assign troops to the force. US sources indicate that a number of African nations, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mali have so far accepted the principal of joining the force.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), however, has remained more cautious over plans for a 10,000 inter-African force that would intervene to set up safe havens for civilians during any conflict on the continent, financed by developed nations. "Anything that enhances Africa's capacity is welcome, but it needs further consultations and clarifications," OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim said after Warren Christopher outlined the plan to OAU Ambassadors on 10 October.

The OAU Secretary General has requested clarification on who would command the new force and has expressed concern about "the issue of sustainable (financial) support" for it. Salim also expressed concern over why Washington had selected only a few countries to potentially provide troops for what should, in the OAU's view, be a pan-African initiative.

Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 10 October)

The trial of Ethiopian former dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam and his military aides accused of genocide and other crimes resumed hearings in Addis Ababa in mid-October. Although the Chief Justice has stated that the trials of Mengistu and other ex-officials are not expected to extend beyond two years, most observers are less optimistic and a great deal of evidence, including videotapes, still needs to be reviewed and potential defense witnesses must be heard.

A further 1,800 former officials held mostly since 1991 are also likely to face the death penalty, although the government has said it favours only a "limited number" of executions of those found guilty of the worst crimes.

Forty-six defendants have been appearing in the court; a remaining three defendants and former Derg officials have been given sanctuary at the Italian Embassy since the downfall of Mengistu's regime.

(Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 11 October & Amnesty International Report 26 October)

The International Monetary Fund has approved a three-year loan for Ethiopia worth 127 million dollars to fuel the government's economic reform program through 1999. The loans are to help reforms that were begun in 1992 to stabilize the economy and replace the previous system of central control and planning with a market-based system. According to the IMF, over the last year Ethiopia has experienced economic growth of 7.7 percent and a sharp decline in the rate of inflation (down to 1.2 percent despite lower prices for coffee, a major export).

The economic reform is aimed at increasing domestic savings and investment and a further liberalization of the exchange and trade system. It also calls for accelerated privatization.

(Agence France Presse, Washington, 12 October)

A high court in Addis Ababa postponed the trials of an Ethiopian labour leader and an opposition politician, both of whom are accused of ties with armed bands. The trial of the chairman of the National Teachers' Union, Taye Wolde Semayat, was adjourned until 25 October.

Ethiopian police arrested Taye on 30 May and have accused him of having links with a clandestine movement called the Ethiopian People's Liberation Front. Police charge that the EPLF has an armed wing and is seeking to de-stabilise the government.

The trial of Asrat Woldeyes, chairman of the opposition All Amhara People's Organisation, who is already serving a five-year sentence on conviction of "inciting ethnic hatred", was also postponed until 5 November. Asrat was brought to court in mid-October on a new charge of "constituting an armed group in different Ethiopian regions to overthrow the government by force".

Some 30 other people are detained on the same charge.

(Agence France Presse, Addis Ababa, 14 October)

The chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League, Dr. Abdul Mejid Hussein announced the possibility of a merger between ESDL and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, stating that as such a merge would be in the interest of Ethiopian Somalis.

Dr. Abdul Mejid who is also Minister of Transport and Communications, was quoted by the paper *Abiyotawi Democracy*, an organ of the EPRDF, as stating that the decision to merge is in line with the willingness of its members, adding that the people of the Somali Region, which covers one third of the total area of the country with an estimated population of 5-6 million, have a strong desire to work with other democratic forces for the peace and progress of Ethiopia and that of the entire Horn of Africa.

(ENA, Addis Ababa, 16 October and The Seven Day Update, 21 October)

A French researcher was killed in Dire Dawa in eastern Ethiopia, according to French embassy sources in Addis Ababa. The Frenchman was gunned down in the centre of the city on 16 October by unidentified assailants. Earlier in the month, a German was shot and killed in Dire Dawa.

(Agence France Presse, 17 October)

According to a report by Amnesty International, on 20 September 1996 three Egyptian nationals were sentenced to death by the Federal Supreme Court in Addis Ababa, convicted of involvement in an attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa on 16 June 1995 during a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity. The defendants were also convicted of killing two Ethiopian police officers in the same incident.

(Amnesty International Report, 26 October)

A report in the private weekly, *Genanaw* (26 September), indicates that the Saudi Arabian Government is assisting two Islamic groups, the Al Ittihaad Al Islamiya and the Ormo Islamic Liberation Front operating in Ethiopia. The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia has denied the report.

(Seven Day Update, Addis Ababa, 7 October)

KENYA

Kenya has lodged a claim with the United Nations for Kenya Shillings 1.14 billion (\$20 million) which it says the UN owes for Kenya's participation in various peacekeeping missions. The U.N., however, maintains that it owes Kenya only \$4.3 million, part of \$59.4 million owed to eight African countries involved in peacekeeping and which, given the serious financial crisis of the U.N., would be repaid when funds were available.

(The East African, Nairobi, 28 October - 3 November)

The Kenyan Information Minister, Johnstone Makau, and his deputy, Shariff Nassir, publicly criticised two European ambassadors in Kenya for their remarks supporting the independence and neutrality of the Kenyan Electoral Commission in view of the 1997 general elections, calling the statements "unfortunate" and interference with Kenyan affairs. Donors have indicated that the neutrality of the Commission is linked with their future support of the country.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 21 & 28 September)

SOMALIA

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi on 3 October secured the release of an Australian pilot detained in Somalia for the past four months. According to a statement by the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, the pilot, Justin Fraser, was arrested on 25 May at Huddur in southwest Somalia and taken to Baidoa, where he was detained by militia forces loyal to the Aideed administration. Fraser was taken into custody following an emergency landing in Baidoa while returning from the delivery of qat in Belet Wein, southwest Somalia.

(Agence France Presse, Nairobi, 3 October)

U.N. aid agencies, protesting against the wounding and kidnapping of a local aid worker last month (staff of the Life and Peace Institute), on 2 October suspended all non-emergency operations in the Somali capital.

The suspension of activities in Mogadishu came after the Nairobi-based Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB), which is chaired by the European Union and groups donors, UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations, recommended the suspension a few days earlier. Other aid groups outside the U.N. system said they would also halt operations but gave no details. Expatriate aid workers flew out of Mogadishu on 2 October to Nairobi following the SACB-backed action.

(Reuters and Agence France Presse, Nairobi 2-3 October)

Gunmen shot and wounded a U.N. aid worker in Somalia on 28 October after trying to kidnap him. A warehouse officer for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was shot in south Mogadishu after refusing to follow the orders of the would-be kidnappers.

(Reuter, Mogadishu, 28 October)

Two senior officials of the Somali faction headed by Osman Hassan Ali "Atto" were shot dead on 5 October, while traveling by sea from north Mogadishu to the Medina district in the south of the partitioned capital. Faction Secretary General Mohamed Ahmed Nur and Engineer Abdulqadir Warsame George were killed when their boat was attacked by armed boats belonging to the rival faction headed by Hussein Aidid.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 6 October)

The three main rival Somali faction leaders pursued discreet talks in Nairobi on 10 October, where Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi was said to be mediating. Aides to Hussein Mohamed Aidid, Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Ali Osman Atto confirmed that the three men had been in the Kenyan capital for one or two days at the invitation of the Kenyan president, in a bid to relaunch the peace process in Somalia.

(Agence France Presse, Nairobi, 10 October)

At least two people were killed and 12 others wounded when two rival groups in a faction headed by Somali warlord Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan" clashed in the southern Somali port town of Kismayo, radio reports monitored here Saturday said. The violence was reported to have been triggered by a disagreement over the sharing of revenue collected from arriving commercial vessels. A ceasefire was, however, brokered by clan elders after which the warring factions agreed that neither side had the right to levy taxes on ships arriving at the port. The elders were trying to set up a neutral committee to run the facility. The unrest was the first incident of violence in Kismayo since April when visiting European Union officials found themselves caught up in factional fighting.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 12 October)

Militiamen loyal to Somali faction leader Hussein Mohamed Aidid killed at least five people, wounded 23 others and torched some 73 homes when they attacked two villages near the southwestern town of Baidoa. A member of the rival faction Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), which is fighting to drive out Aidid's militiamen from Baidoa and surrounding areas, accused Aidid's fighters of carrying out the raid on Gof-Gadud and Qahira villages on 12 October.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 13 October)

A bomb exploded outside the north Mogadishu home of Colonel Hassan Shati Gudud, the commander of the Somali faction Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), damaging several buildings but not wounding anyone.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 14 October)

Somalia's three leading warlords declared a ceasefire on 15 October, after their first face-to-face talks in Nairobi mediated by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi.

Hussein Mohamed Aidid, Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Osman Hassan Ali "Atto" declared in a joint communique a "cessation of hostilities ... with immediate effect", stating they would allow free movement of people in Mogadishu, the divided capital, would also remove all roadblocks leading from one region to another, halt "media propaganda", and facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid. The three factions have held previous peace conferences, but only with their own allies. The communique made no mention of Mogadishu's seaport and international airport, which have both been closed since the UN troops pulled out.

The three leaders pledged in the unsigned communique to preserve Somalia's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also said that they "strongly reject any attempt to initiate bilateral negotiations that may detract, divert attention from or undermine the Somali peace process".

(Agence France Presse, Nairobi, 15 October)

In spite of the recent agreement between the three rival Somali leaders, at least 21 people were killed and 50 wounded on 30 October when militia loyal to Osman Hassan Ali "Atto" attacked and occupied an airstrip 50 kilometres south of Mogadishu. The attacks came as planes were landing to deliver qat at the airstrip, which had been until then under the control of Aideed supporters.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 30 October)

An aide to Somali faction leader Ali Mahdi Mohamed on 23 October accused Hussein Mohamed Aidid of violating the peace pact signed in the Kenyan capital Nairobi by Somalia's faction heads. Hussein Ahmed Kadare, Ali Madhi's information secretary, said Aidid had failed to comply with agreements reached during peace talks brokered a week earlier by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi. Agreement for a "cessation of hostilities" between the three main Somali factions.

Meanwhile, Aidid has said the "government" proclaimed by his slain father General Mohamed Farah Aidid in south Mogadishu will continue to rule despite the Nairobi agreement. Speaking in a radio address to his supporters, Aidid indicated that the Nairobi meeting had not made him

change his mind about his late father's government. Aideed lowered hopes for a negotiated end to the clan wars in Somalia when he told a news conference in Nairobi that his position as "interim president of Somalia" was not negotiable.

(Agence France Presse, Mogadishu, 23 October)

"Somaliland"

The second term of the Somaliland president, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal will come to an end on 5 November 1996 with presidential election scheduled to take place. Many believe that Egal will be re-elected at president for a third term.

(UN Ethiopia, October 1996)

The forthcoming November elections in Hargiesia (capital of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland) has led to increased tension in "Somaliland" (North-west Somalia) throughout September and October.

(UNDP Somalia, September Report)

The Somaliland Council of Elders (Guurti), working on arrangements for the up-coming national conference to decide on the future of "Somaliland" have agreed on a budget to cover the cost of the meeting. The venue of the peace and reconciliation conference and its participation, however, remain disputed by the various clans.

(UNDP Somalia, September Report)

The Somaliland Congress, postponed several times, was reopened and officially restarted work on 27 October. Congress has sanctioned an extension of Egal's Administration until it's work has been concluded and a new administration has been elected.

(UN Ethiopia, October 1996)

Somaliland President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal has indicated that he holds Djibouti authorities partly responsible for the setback of his campaign for international recognition of Somaliland as a state, citing the opposition of Djibouti to Somaliland's stand within the OAU and the Arab League. Egal has also protested against Djiboutian President,

Hassan Gouled Aptidon's tolerance towards Issa militia units campaigning for the western part of Somaliland to be transferred to Djibouti, and who periodically carry out cross border raids on convoys on the Loyada-Zeila road.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter, 5 October)

SUDAN

Christian organisations initiated in October the groundwork for a round table discussion in Paris (14 October) on human rights in Sudan and the civil war in Southern Sudan. The meeting was

organised within the framework of a week-long propaganda campaign and was followed by meetings with several donor governments.

(Indian Ocean Newsletter 5 October)

The Sudan Government has jailed more than 50 people and closed eight foreign exchange houses in a major crackdown on illegal trade in foreign currency. According to a private paper, Alwan, prison terms ranging from six months to three years have been set for hard currency brokers and dealers of forged money.

(Nation Newspaper, Nairobi, 20 October)

Many students were arrested in Khartoum following demonstrations there in early September.

(Africa Analysis, No. 240, September)

According to a report in the Khartoum paper *Al Sudan Al Hadi*, the Sudanese Government has claimed victory over the forces of the Sudan National Democratic Front, which it says is organised and supported by neighbouring Eritrea.

(Press Digest, Addis Ababa, 24 October)

Staff of MSF-Belgium, WFP and UNICEF traveled to Akobo (on the Sudanese side, bordering Ethiopia) between 4-6 October to assess the food economy, general security, flood damage, the situation of the displaced, and the state of ongoing programmes in the area. On recommendation that programmes resume, and given the necessary security clearance, MSF-Belgium and Veterinaires sans Frontieres-Belgium planned to return to Akobo on 13 October to resume health and livestock outreach services. OLS staff were relocated from Akobo to Lokichokio on 8 September as a precautionary measure due to insecurity.

(Operation Lifeline Sudan, Nairobi, 8 October)

An aerial survey by UNICEF has shown flood affected, submerged villages close to Pibor river (southern Sudan). Crop damage seems extensive and food shortages are expected in the area. A large number of people have moved into Pibor town and a high incidence of diseases has been reported by the local relief committee, although relief supplies were provided from early October.

(UN-DHA, Geneva Report No. 5, Sudan Floods, 9 October)

Two Sudan Government officials were released in Aburoc on 2 October after being held for seven days by forces of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army - United. The two officials, both with the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC), were seized from a WFP barge at Detwok, near Kodok, on the White Nile on 25 September and were taken to an undisclosed location where they were detained.

(Operation Lifeline Sudan, Nairobi, 1 October)

The villages of Maridi and Tambura in Western Equatoria were bombed on 26 September. Three bombs were dropped near the town of Maridi, reportedly wounding four civilians. In Tambura, at least 11 bombs were dropped wounding five civilians.

(Operation Lifeline Sudan, Nairobi, 1 October)

Flights into Pochalla and other parts of southern Sudan, with some exceptions, resumed in early October allowing access for provision of relief assistance to flood affected victims.

(Operation Lifeline Sudan, Nairobi, 8 October)

The joint FAO/WFP/UNICEF crop assessment for 1996, which began 11 September, was completed in early October. The assessment team visited sites in Western Equatoria, western Upper Nile, northern Bahr el Ghazal, Juba, Malakal and the Sobat Basin to determine yields and potential shortfalls. Preliminary findings indicated that Juba, Jonglei, Gogrial and Aweil will be the hardest hit in the coming months due to excessive rain causing crop disease and flooding, and insecurity.

(Operation Lifeline Sudan, Nairobi, 8 October)

Bulgarian companies are joining Chinese and French consortia in prospecting for gold in Sudan. Production is expected to begin soon in the south-eastern regions of Gissan and Kurmuk near the Ethiopian border, where Chinese companies are exploring.

(Africa Analysis, No. 240, September)

UGANDA

Uganda's Defense Ministry has announced a countrywide army recruitment 8 November to 2 December in an attempt to strengthen the army in its fight against the armed rebellion in the north of the country. The recruitment comes shortly after the demobilisation exercise by the Uganda People's Defense Forces (1992-1995) that reduced the number of military personnel by half from an initial 100,000, with the overall aim of developing a leaner and more efficient army. Since then, however, the rebellion in the north has forced the army to recall some 7,500 veterans and initiate the more recent call for recruitment.

(Nation Newspaper, Nairobi, 20 October)

Reports by UNHCR indicate unidentified gunman killed 16 Sudanese refugees and seriously wounded five others on 24 October in an attack on a settlement in northern Uganda. According to a UNHCR spokesperson, gunmen launched a seven-hour attack on Palorinya refugee settlement, looting and destroying many thatched mud huts (about 40 percent) in the settlement, which is home to 21,000 refugees.

(IRIN, Nairobi, Report 22-27 October)

Doctors and medical staff in Ugandan cities went on strike in the third week of October, demanding overall pay increases. The Ugandan government has responded to the strikes by ordering the medical workers to return to work by noon 25 October or be risk being fired.

(IRIN, Nairobi, Report 22-27 October)

Some 84 UN and NGO staff were pulled out of Pakele, northern Uganda after UNHCR and Lutheran World Federation offices were attacked and ransacked by an armed group who burned vehicles and communications equipment and also attacked military installations in the area. Over half of the 229,000 Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda are supported by UNHCR.

(IRIN, Nairobi, Report 22-27 October)

Peace agreements between Sudan and Uganda came under strain after the Sudanese Government admitted having bombed northern Uganda on 22 September. On 21 October Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni launched a new verbal attack on the Sudan government whom Uganda accuses of supporting two rebel movements, including the LRA. Sudan has denied the charges and accuses Uganda of supporting southern Sudanese rebel groups. The two countries broke off diplomatic relations in April 1995, but signed a normalization accord in September during talks brokered by Iran. However, since the peace talks began there has been a marked escalation in rebel activities in northern Uganda. Museveni's recent comment that he had "no faith in the current negotiations" have cast further doubts on the talks.

(IRIN, Nairobi, Report 22-27 October)

A week long strike in Uganda over the introduction in early October of a new Value Added Tax (17 percent) affected most shops and trade in central Kampala. The government, which had initially announced that no revisions would be made to the new tax regulations, later accepted certain flaws in its implementation. Subsequently, a tax board has been established to review the situation and mediate between the Ugandan Revenue Authority and taxpayers. The strikes, meanwhile, sent commodity prices soaring with food, cement and fuel prices registering especially steep increases.

(The East African, Nairobi, 7-13 October)

The Ugandan Parliament has approved a bill for nationwide district and local council elections. The council poll, which involves the filling of nine posts in each of the country's 29,000 villages, 4251 parishes, 850 sub-counties and municipalities, 169 counties and 39 districts, completes a process that started with the new constitution and presidential elections on 9 May.

(IRIN, Nairobi, 7 October)

A countrywide shortage of staple crops has been reported in Uganda, with bean and maize prices doubling in Kampala. Prices are even higher outside the capital city. According to the national secretary of the Commercial Farmers Association, some farmers, demoralised by the impending sale of their properties, opted against producing the two staple crops during the last cropping season.

(IRIN, Nairobi, 7 October)

The Ugandan Government has given Kenya a stern warning on the issue of electricity tariffs, stating that Kenya should pay for Ugandan electricity at "current market rates". According to Uganda's High Commissioner to Kenya, negotiations between the two countries on the electricity tariff rates have been going on for the past three to four years, although talks have been stalled in the last few months.

Tanzania and Rwanda, two other countries receiving electricity from Uganda, are paying \$8 cents per kilowatt per hour, but Kenya has been operating on the basis of an agreement drawn up during the British colony times and which Uganda considers as “obsolete”.

(Nation Newspaper, Nairobi, 20 October)

At the end of 1996 the Ugandan Government is expected to name a new core investor in the privatisation of the Coffee Marketing Board Ltd (CMBL), a former state coffee monopoly. Local investors have been cautious, but with advertisements placed in both the local and foreign press, interest has been sparked among investors in Europe and Asia.

(Africa Analysis, No. 240, September)
