

## HORN OF AFRICA *The Monthly Review*

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This update covers the period April-May 1998

### REGIONAL ISSUES

***Kofi Annan visits the Horn of Africa:*** United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan arrived in Addis Ababa April 29 on the first stop of an eight country African tour. During his three day stay in Ethiopia, Annan met with President Negasso Gidada and held discussions with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin. Annan expressed appreciation for the role played by Ethiopia in regional efforts to achieve peace and stability in Sudan and Somalia. Together with President Negasso, Annan went on to inaugurate the new UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa and give a keynote address at the international conference on "African Women and Economic Development" held to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Following a meeting with Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary General of the OAU, Annan announced an agreement for the two bodies to work together to create a continental peace-keeping capacity. He said that experts would be meeting in due course to determine what was needed to create an African peace-keeping force.

On May 2, Annan flew to Djibouti to meet President Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Before going on to Kenya, Annan called upon Somalis to "resolve their problems so that they can reconcile and re-establish the groundwork of a state". In Kenya, the Secretary General focussed his attention on aid to famine-stricken south Sudan. Speaking shortly before the opening of a new round of negotiations between the Sudanese Government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLA), Annan said Khartoum had "agreed to remove all impediments" to getting aid to people facing starvation. From Kenya, Annan visited the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, before going on to Burundi and Rwanda.

In Rwanda the Secretary General received a hostile welcome. In a speech to the Rwandan national assembly, Annan admitted that "in their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda". He said he had come to Rwanda on a "mission of healing" but Rwandan radio described the speech as "insensitive, insulting and arrogant". Annan's subsequent 24 hour stay in Uganda probably came as a welcome contrast to the frosty reception he experienced in Rwanda. Annan held what he described as "good discussions" with President Yoweri Museveni, during which the issue of a regional peace keeping force was again raised. Earlier the same day, the Secretary General addressed a ministerial meeting on refugee issues in the Great Lakes region that was convened by OAU secretary general, Salim Ahmed Salim, and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata. In his speech, Annan called for the establishment of an "international mechanism" to help countries of asylum to maintain the civilian character of refugee camps, adding that "Humanitarian agencies should not be expected to address and resolve problems which require political and military responses such as the separation of refugees from military elements, militiamen and terrorists."

Heading to Eritrea after his stop in Uganda, Annan's plane made an unscheduled stop in Khartoum reportedly due to "bad weather". An impromptu meeting took place between Annan and Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Osman Ismail where the talks focused on relief operations in the south and progress made at the peace negotiations in Nairobi which ended on May 7. Annan ended his African tour on a somewhat downbeat note in Eritrea where he heard more criticism of the United Nations, this time from President Isaias Afewerki. Speaking at a joint conference in the Eritrean capital, Afewerki criticised the UN and foreign aid agencies who he claimed often did a "mediocre job"; "We want a different United Nations," one which would not repeat past mistakes and would be "relevant for Africa," Afewerki said. (*ECA Press Release No. 43; The Monitor, April 21-30 and May 2-3; The Ethiopian Herald, April 29; The Reporter, April 29; UN-IRIN, May 8; The Monitor/Reuters, May 12; AFP, various dates*)

**Kenya to host regional military exercise:** Kenya will host a large military exercise in June, involving troops from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the United States Central and European commands. Over 2,000 combat troops will participate in the three week exercise in northwestern Kenya. The US troops will conduct initial training in peace support operations in both Uganda and Tanzania prior to the exercise. *(PANA, April 4)*

**Ethiopia-Djibouti railway:** Ethiopia and Djibouti have announced plans to revitalize the century-old railway which snakes 781 km to link Addis Ababa with the Red Sea. The ailing Chemin de Fer Djibouti-Ethiopia (CDE) rail company is to cut salaries, which soak up 60 per cent of the company's revenues, according to Djibouti's Minister for Transport and Telecommunications, Abdallah Abdillahi Miguil at the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the CDE Board of Directors. The Ethiopian Minister of Transport and Telecommunications, Abdulmejid Hussein, told the meeting the CDE would soon decide on a European Union survey detailing a lease concession option to enable the private sector to buy up portions of the CDE. France and EU have agreed to fund the US \$ 100 million emergency package, said Abdulmejid, who added that CDE needed US \$1.5 billion for a complete overhaul. *(Addis Tribune, April 25)*

**IGAD sets up emergency fund:** The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is setting up an emergency fund to cope with wars and disasters. The organization wants up to US \$1 million for the fund, which IGAD Executive Secretary Tekeste Ghebray said would back-up, rather than supplant, existing humanitarian organisations. So far, donors have pledged \$500,000 to the fund, of which the United States has donated \$300,000. The United States has also earmarked \$7.4 million over five years for IGAD as part of its wish to see a regional capacity for conflict management. The IGAD secretariat discussed the emergency fund during a recent technical meeting with donors. *(The Monitor/Reuters, May 2-3; Press Digest, May 7)*

## DJIBOUTI

**FRUD petitions IGAD:** The Front pour la Restoration de l'Unite et de la Democratie (FRUD, the Afar rebellion) has submitted a dossier on its conflict with the Djibouti government to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In a letter to IGAD Executive Secretary Tekeste Ghebray, FRUD chairman Ahmed Dini asked for "the question of the internal conflict in Djibouti" to be added to the agenda of the next IGAD meeting. However, the government of IGAD-member Djibouti has refused to negotiate with FRUD. Dini pointed out that the reality of the conflict was proven "by the presence of FRUD prisoners in Gabode prison, in Djibouti town" and also by the government prisoners held by the Afar rebels. *(The Indian Ocean Newsletter, March 14)*

**French Defense Minister visits:** During a brief visit to Djibouti, French Defense Minister Alain Richard announced that French forces in Djibouti under defense agreements would be cut back from 3,200 to some 2,500 men. The reduction, echoing those carried out elsewhere in Africa by Paris, was decided under a general plan to professionalise and reduce the size of the French armed forces. After meeting President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, Richard said that despite the reductions, Djibouti would still play a large role in France's international military strategy. Richard later visited neighbouring Ethiopia where he met Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to discuss military cooperation, especially in the area of training. He also met the OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim to make a contribution of US \$1 million to OAU's peacekeeping fund. *(AFP, April 2; The Monitor, April 4-5)*

**Defense minister gives interview.** Djibouti's Defense and Security minister and Chief of Staff of the President's Office, Ismail Omar Jile, has given a wide-ranging interview to the Ethiopian monthly *Efoita*. In this he remarked that the French government had "reservations about some of the policies we advance", adding that "negative comments" had been given regarding Djibouti's growing diplomatic and economic ties with the United States. On port services, Ismail said that Djibouti was ready to take measures to reduce port dues and fees and to relieve port congestion. He added that Djibouti was holding talks with port authorities in Aden, Massawa and Assab to try and establish uniform rates for merchant shipping services and standardise tariffs in a way that would be beneficial to the future development of all ports. However, in so far as Ethiopia is concerned, no changes would be made to existing service charges. *(Press Digest, April 23; Seven Days Update, May 11)*

**Minister suspected of embezzlement:** According to a story in the Indian Ocean Newsletter, the Minister of Public Works, Urban Development and Housing has been implicated in an act of embezzlement amounting to about US \$140,000 while he was the minister of justice. The irregularity was discovered when the new Minister of Justice, Mohamed Diri Farah, asked for a complete statement of accounts for his ministry. The missing funds were confirmed by an investigation carried out by treasury inspectors. A clerk at the Ministry of Justice is said to have admitted to the embezzlement. (*Press Digest, April 23*)

## ERITREA

**Assab port operations:** The general manager of Eritrea's Assab port has said that in the last three months, the port handled around 140 ships and unload 288,444 tons of goods. He added that the port service had grown by 39 per cent in the period. The port previously used to accommodate around 50,000 tons, storage has now reached around 150,000 tons. A recent reduction in tariffs by 20 per cent was thought to be the main reason for the increase in traffic. Somewhat contradicting such a positive report, however, is a recent directive issued by Ethiopian Shipping Lines to all its European, Far East and Gulf agents instructing them not to accept "cargo in consolidated containers, all imported vehicles, and all imported cargo less than 10 tons per bill of lading or operation" destined for Assab. The directive follows a notice from the Eritrean Shipping and Transit Agency Services that it was no longer in a position to handle such cargo. (*The Reporter, April 15 & May 13*)

**Eritrea privatises four companies:** The Eritrean government sold four more state-owned companies in March, bringing to eight the number of companies sold. The Privatisation Commission said it raised US \$7.2 million from the sale of the Gash tobacco company to Rothmans. Also a textile factory, the bus assembly plant *Eribus* and the Gejeret Carbon and Silicate plant have been sold. Of the remaining 31 companies earmarked for privatization, another seven are in the final stage of sale. The next is the Melotti brewery in Asmara, which has a strong position in the local market. The government's investment plan offers incentives such as tax exemption to attract foreign capital. (*The Monitor, April 16*)

**Nakfa to float:** The National Bank of Eritrea has announced that the Nakfa would be allowed to float freely on the currency markets from the first of May. The bank said this was in line with government policy whereby prices, interest rates and foreign exchange would be determined by market forces. The Nakfa has been fixed at between 7.05 and 7.20 to the US dollar since its introduction in November last year. The currency has been stable on the parallel market at around 7.30/7.50 to the dollar according to reports. Officials have said the central bank would intervene directly if the Nakfa moved too high or too low but declined to specify a particular band for the currency. In a concurrent move, the central bank has also announced that it would be granting foreign currency trading licenses to private traders and commercial banks. (*The Monitor/Reuters, April 25-26*)

**Chinese delegation on a working visit:** A Chinese trade and economy delegation headed by Yang Wensheng, Vice Minister for External Trade and Co-operation, visited Eritrea on April 24 and held talks with the President Isaias Afeworki, assuring him that there exists good prospects for investment in Eritrea and for strengthening bilateral co-operation. Meanwhile, the two countries signed an agreement on the construction of a 200-bed hospital in Asmara to be funded partly by aid from the PRC and partly through a loan obtained from China. The delegation also visited Massawa and held talks with the Fisheries Minister. (*Press Digest, April 30*)

**President Isaias Afeworki in USA:** Eritrean President Isaias Afeworki and US President Bill Clinton held talks at the White House on April 29. Afeworki also has met National Security Advisor Samuel Sandy Berger, Acting Secretary at the State Department, Strob Talbot, the Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs, Thomas Pickering and Susan Rice, who is in charge of African Affairs at the State Department. The Afeworki, speaking after the meetings, noted the positive orientation towards Africa, namely the development of relations based on partnership. President Clinton in turn reiterated the desire of his country to continue working to promote partnership with the African continent. (*Press Digest, May 7*)

**Thousands mobilised for reconstruction drive:** Eritrea has launched a one month National Development Campaign which aims to develop agriculture and promote reconstruction of its war-damaged infrastructure. 60,000 civilian and military personnel have been recruited for the campaign, including 43,000 youths who

have recently completed their national service. The scheme will include agricultural projects to prevent soil erosion and improve irrigation, and repairs to roads damaged during the war. The cost of the campaign is estimated at 16 million Nakfa (US \$2.2 million). (*Press Digest, May 7; The Monitor/Reuters, May 2-3*)

## ETHIOPIA

**Former military officers in court:** On April 3, eighty-one officers accused of taking part in the bloody "Red Terror" campaign under the former regime appeared in court on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. The defendants, including former police agents and military chiefs, are accused of having executed 114 people between 1975-1985 in several districts. Their trials will officially begin June 3 and 8. (*ENA/AFP, April 3*)

**International drive to expand use of fertiliser:** The World Bank's International Development Agency (IDA) and the Ethiopian government have earmarked US \$230 million for a programme to develop and expand the use of fertilisers. According to the official Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), IDA has contributed US \$120 million, while Ethiopian government is releasing US \$110 million for the programme. As part of the new programme, the analysis of water and soil are under way at 33 sites to determine environmental risks associated with the use of specific fertilisers. To expand coverage throughout the country, soil test laboratories are presently under construction in Awassa, Bahir Dar, Gambella and Mekele, with more planned at Bedele, Dessie, Wolkite and Ziway. Meanwhile, according to reports, demand for fertiliser is growing in the country by 15 per cent per year. For 1998, demand is expected to reach 368,000 tons, of which Ethiopia's Agricultural Supply Enterprise will cover 55 per cent and private importers are expected to come up with the remaining 45 per cent. (*Addis Tribune, April 24; The Monitor, April 7; AFP, April 8*)

**Debt to Russia:** Ethiopia has called for bilateral negotiations to determine the extent of the country's debt to Russia. The debt, estimated at US \$492 million, was lent to Soviet-backed former dictator Mengistu for the purchase of arms. Russian Federation ambassador to Ethiopia, Vladimir Volkov, has said his country would write off a "lion's share" of the debt but has not given figures. Russian sources added the conciliation could be as much as 80 per cent of the total debt based on Paris Club conditions. Russian trade to Ethiopia had fallen from US \$300 million in the 1980s to \$37 million in 1997. (*The Reporter, April 8*)

**WFP appeals for more food:** The UN World Food Programme announced April 9 that it was still urgently seeking donor contributions to make up the 60,000 tons of relief food pledged by the organisation to meet the needs of 800,000 people in drought-affected parts of the country. Country Director Khaled Adly says that WFP have so far received only five per cent of the contributions needed. The main season harvest between December and January normally represents 90 and 95 per cent of the country's annual grain production. 1997/98 production fell by 26 per cent to 8.8 million tons compared with the 11.8 million tons of the previous year. While famine is not imminent, to avoid a potential humanitarian crisis later in the year WFP say it is imperative that food aid donations arrive quickly in order that food can be pre-positioned in vulnerable regions before the start of the main rains in July. WFP still need 57,500 tons of food for its emergency relief operations from May through October 1998. (*The Monitor, April 11-12; Addis Tribune, April 10*)

**Laurent Kabila visits Ethiopia:** President of the Democratic Republic of Congo Laurent Kabila with his Minister of Economic Affairs and Petroleum, and International Co-operation Minister Celestin Luangi arrived in Addis Ababa on April 7 for a five-day official visit. He met Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and discussed further strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. In a joint communiqué it was announced that an agreement had been signed between Ethiopia and Congo which will serve as a basis for co-operation in mining, energy and industry, with immediate co-operation in aviation and the media. The two leaders also stressed the urgent need for assistance by the international community in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure in Congo. Kabila, who was said to be suffering from a serious bout of malaria which forced him to cancel a number of public engagements, also met the OAU Secretary General, who assured the support of OAU for all efforts aimed at promoting stability, harmony and reconciliation in Congo. (*The Ethiopian Herald, April 12; The Monitor, April 11-12; & other sources*)

**US-donated aircraft arrive:** Two C-130B Hercules military transport aircraft will arrive soon at the Air Force base in Debre Zeit. This will be the first delivery of a total of four aircraft donated by the United States to

Ethiopia; the remaining two will arrive later in 1998. The new equipment can be used for military, peacekeeping, or humanitarian missions. (*USIS News Release, April 9; The Monitor, April 11-12*)

**Revised population estimate:** The Central Statistical Authority (CSA) has reported that the total Ethiopian population presently stands at 58,652,158. The population living in rural areas is 50,149,190 while the urban population is at 8,502,968 (an 14.5 per cent / 85.5 per cent urban/rural split). The present figure has taken as its basis the 1994 population and housing census and includes the latest census figures from the Somali region. (*Ethiopian Herald, April 14*)

**Road rehabilitation:** Ethiopia plans to start spending US \$3.4 billion this year on overhauling the country's dilapidated road network, two years after the launch of a 10 year road rehabilitation programme. Funds have been raised through loans and grants from donor nations and institutions as well as from the government's budget. As well as constructing new roads, the project aims to restore 24,000 kms of rural roads of which only 20 per cent are said to be in good condition. The Ethiopian Roads Authority say up to US \$2.75 billion will be spent between now and 2001, with the remainder of the fund to be spent by 2006. The World Bank has agreed to grant US \$309 million in loans which will be used to upgrade 1,300 km in the northern and eastern regions of the country. The European Union is funding a US \$300 million four-year 1,000 km asphalt road restoration programme, connecting Ethiopia's farming regions with ports and external markets. (*The Monitor, April 18-19; The Ethiopian Herald, April 14*)

**New foreign trade strategy:** The Trade and Industry Minister announced in an interview with the magazine *Mereva* that rather than focus on substituting imported items with local products Ethiopia's trade strategy will change in favour of boosting foreign trade. The business community will have the opportunity to discuss the new strategy once its framework has been completed. On relations with the business community and the chamber of Commerce, the Minister said the government is working towards the implementation of a study on the organisation of chambers of commerce which are believed to promote the partnership between the government and the business community. (*Ethiopian Herald, April 14*)

**Ethiopian Jews in Jerusalem:** Some 200 Falasha Mura families arrived March 22 in Jerusalem. The new comers marked another step in the government's programme to bring 3,000 Falasha to Israel within a year. Some 1,500 have already arrived, most of whom are at the Hazarat Yaas camp near Acre. The Israeli government plans to take hundreds of Ethiopian immigrants straight from the airport to Jewish settlements in the West Bank. (*The Reporter, April 15*)

**Crop-eating birds and locusts:** In a recent press release, the Addis Ababa-based Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa (DLCO-EA) reported that between July and December last year it was able to destroy over 85 million grain-eating *Quelea* birds that had been threatening lowland crops along the rift valley area. Deploying two planes equipped with chemical sprayers, DLCO control operations were conducted at known *Quelea* breeding colonies and roosting sites in Gode, Jigjiga, North and East Shewa, Arsi and East Hararghe. It is estimated that last year *Quelea* birds destroyed at least 1,300 hectares of food crops. *Quelea* are tiny seed-eating birds that under favourable conditions breed rapidly and flock in huge numbers. A large flock can comprise several million birds - collectively capable of devouring whole fields in a matter of minutes. DLCO also said it has acted in eastern Ethiopia to control an invasion of desert locusts. A number of locust swarms are estimated to have destroyed over 3,400 hectares of crops in Ethiopia's Somali region since the beginning of March. (DLCO Press Release/*The Monitor, April 18-19*)

**Ethiopia and Sweden sign co-operation agreement:** Ethiopia and Sweden have signed a co-operation agreement to undertake 22 development and research projects. The Swedish government will spend 39 million birr (approximately US \$5.6 million) in the fields of agriculture, natural sciences and technology, health and related science and technology support activities in Ethiopia over a two-year period beginning January 1, 1999. (*The Ethiopian Herald, April 22*)

**Ethiopian journalists in prison:** Amnesty International charge in a recent report that there are currently at least 16 journalists held in prisons in Addis Ababa. According to the report, during the past five years, over 200 editors and reporters from the independent private press have been arrested at various times, and several of them many times over. Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Representatives, Dawit Yohannes, told reporters that only those member of the private press that are accredited and law-abiding would be admitted into the forthcoming international conference on human rights commissions and ombudsmen to be held in Addis Ababa from May 18 to 22. Yohannes warned, "We know that the private

press, the print media in particular, have not yet sufficiently developed to serve as a reliable bridge between parliament and the people." (*Amnesty International report, April 23; Ethiopian Herald, May 9*)

## SOMALIA

**Somali refugees claim Mozambican link:** Mozambican Prime Minister Pascal Mocumbi told journalists that his government had no position yet on the possible resettlement in northern Mozambique of about 10,000 Somali refugees who claim Mozambican origins. The request, channeled through the United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR), concerns refugees in the Dadaab camp in Kenya known as Bantu's or Mushungulis who share some cultural and linguistic affinities with certain Mozambican ethnic groups. (*AFP, April 4*)

**Moqdishu faction leaders meet in Kenya:** Ali Mahdi Mohamed, Osman Hassan Ali "Ato", Mohamed Qanyare Afrah and Hussien Aideed met in Nairobi April 7 to 16 to discuss the establishment of a joint administration in the former Somali capital. Kenya as a member of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) brokered the talks which focussed on power sharing and the reopening of Moqdishu's air and sea ports. The four warlords met the Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi and urged him to approach friendly countries and international organizations for funding and technical assistance in order to make their initiative a success as well as to use his influence to secure the reunification of Somalia. They also appealed to Kenya to help train personnel to run Moqdishu's proposed new administration. The four, however, failed to hold any follow-up meetings on their return to Moqdishu and in the absence of concrete action a spokesman for the Hawadle clan in the city told reporters, "The attempt to unite the Somali capital was fruitless and the seaport and airport will not become operational as pledged." It was added that the Somali peace process would have to be "redefined" again with an aim of accommodating all parties. Despite a further announcement by Ali Mahdi and Hussein Aideed on May 11 that the unveiling of a joint administration for the city was "imminent", observers remain skeptical of any real progress on power sharing. (*The Monitor, April 4-5; AFP, April 12 & 30, May 11*)

**Red Cross workers kidnapped:** Ten Red Cross and Red Crescent workers were kidnapped April 15 by Somali gunmen at a Moqdishu airstrip. The group were held for nine days in a north Moqdishu compound before being released April 24 apparently without any ransom being paid other than US \$50,000 to cover "expenses". The kidnappers were from the Da'ud subclan of Ali Mahdi Mohamed's north Moqdishu Abgal clan. During negotiations the kidnappers demanded a \$100,000 ransom for each hostage, threatening that they would be executed within 24 hours if no payment was made. Two of those abducted were Swiss, while the others came from Belgium, France, Germany, Kenya, Norway, Somalia, South Africa and United States. Although physically in good health following their ordeal, doctors reported that all ten were suffering from severe psychological trauma. As a result of the incident, the UN has suspended all humanitarian operations in the city and evacuated its foreign workers pending a reassessment of the political and security situation. The *Al-Jamhuriya* newspaper, charged that Osman Ali "Atto" organised the kidnapping because he felt he had been snubbed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Somalia office director, Thomas Gurtner, who was among the hostages. (*AFP, April 23, 24 & 25*)

**Baidoa conference threatened then cancelled:** A Somali militia commander on April 26 threatened to launch an attack on the central-south town of Baidoa if other faction leaders tried to hold a reconciliation conference there on May 15, as was agreed in the last meeting of warlords. Colonel Hassan Mohamed Nur "Shatigudud", commander of the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), which is fighting against forces loyal to warlord Hussien Aideed, said in an interview that his faction would not allow the conference to take place, adding any attempt to hold a conference would trigger violence. On May 13, officials in Moqdishu told reporters that the reconciliation conference had been finally cancelled because of "factional bickering and lack of funds". (*AFP, April 26 & May 13*)

**Militias battle for control of Kismayo:** Warlords are reinforcing their militias around the southern port city of Kismayo after heavy fighting continued through April into the first week of May. The clashes pit the forces of the Marehan clan, led by General Omar Haji Mohamed, against those of the Majerten led by General Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan". The fighting, accompanied by looting, has prompted aid agencies to suspend operations in the area, which were feeding some 500,000 people, and evacuate their remaining expatriate staff based in Kismayo. Morgan, who currently holds Kismayo, meanwhile claimed that his

Majerten militiamen had captured the village of Kabsuma, 90 km northeast of Kismayo. Meanwhile, at Marere, in the Middle Juba region, a plane chartered by the United Nations was looted of emergency food; on April 21 another plane was looted in Garbaharey, in Gedo region; and 10 drums of aviation fuel were stolen in Juba region. By the end of April the fighting had resulted in at least 45 dead with many more injured. On May 12 the Ethiopian government strongly denied an accusation in the press that it was backing General Morgan's faction. "Ethiopia does not support any one faction in the Republic of Somalia" an official of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Reuters. Previously, the Ethiopian Government had been rumoured to be supporting and arming Omar Haji Mohamed's Somali National Front (SNF) in an effort to keep the extremist al-Itahad at bay but a rift formed when it was learnt that the SNF had aligned itself with the faction of Hussein Aideed. (AFP, April 2; Reuters, April 30; The Monitor/Reuters May 14; other sources)

**Somaliland delegation visits Addis Ababa, asks donors for assistance**, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, president of the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland, together with his foreign minister and other officials, visited the Ethiopian capital from May 6 for talks on co-operation and achieving regional peace. During the five-day visit the delegation met with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other senior Ethiopian officials. On his return to Hargeisa, Egal told local reporters, "We reached agreement with the leaders there to co-operate in every field short of diplomatic recognition". While in Addis Ababa, the Somaliland delegation briefed UN agencies and donors on the economic impact of the Saudi Arabian ban on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa. Foreign Minister Mohamud Salah Noor said the livestock export market is the mainstay of the Somaliland economy and, one way or another, 80 per cent of the population derive their income from livestock. Furthermore, livestock exports are the main source of government revenues and of hard currency. Since the ban was imposed in February, due to Saudi concerns about the spread of Rift Valley Fever, the economy of Somaliland had taken a "nose dive" with the country now on the verge of an "economic meltdown" said Noor. The minister urgently appealed to the donor community to help with a bail-out package to provide emergency budgetary support to the government, as well as for pressure to be brought to bear on the Saudi authorities to lift the ban. Without such assistance, it was warned that the administration in Hargeisa could collapse with dire consequences for security and stability in the region. (AFP, May 6; Government of Somaliland appeal, May 4; The Monitor, May 12)

## SUDAN

**Italian minister in Khartoum:** An Italian minister, Rino Serri, has met with Sudanese officials in Khartoum in a bid to win a cease-fire between the military junta and southern rebels. He met the Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail on April 1 and said that Rome wanted to obtain a cease-fire before the warring sides held talks in Nairobi. According to local media, Serri said that Rome would make efforts to improve relations between Sudan and its neighbours, especially Eritrea and Ethiopia. Later, the European Union added its weight to the call for a cease-fire ahead of the peace talks. "In order to enhance the chances of success of the talks and to end the suffering of the Sudanese people we call upon all parties to effect an immediate ceasefire," said a statement issued by Britain, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency. (AFP, April 2 & May 1)

**Revolt at a military camp:** A Sudanese opposition leader said that 129 Sudanese conscripts had died in a mass bid to escape compulsory military service at a training camp near Khartoum on April 3. After armed guards refused to allow time off for the Moslem Feast of the Sacrifice, it is claimed several hundred conscripts attempted to force their escape but those who were not shot immediately later drowned in the Blue Nile when a boat they boarded capsized. According to Sadeq al-Mahdi, leader of the northern opposition Umma party, "The medical examiner's report said that 74 died from broken necks and bullets wounds to their midsections, stomachs, necks or spinal columns" while another 55 drowned. Shortly after the incident, Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir issued a decree allowing students to put off compulsory military service until after they graduate from university, instead of having to join up straight from secondary school. On April 19, in his first comment on the incident itself, el-Beshir denied that military guards had shot any conscripts. "These are mere defamatory rumours," he was quoted as saying. (AFP, April 12 & 14; The Monitor, April 21)

**Famine relief reaches south:** On April 2, the Sudanese government announced a "temporary" lifting of its ban on relief flights to famine-affected areas of Bar el-Ghazal. The flight ban had been imposed February 4 during fighting for the town of Wau between government troops and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation

Army. According to the UN Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the new clearance would enable the UN and OLS agencies to fly to more than 50 locations in Bahr el-Ghazal, and to 180 countrywide. Aid agencies estimate that some 350,000 people, including 150,000 displaced by the recent fighting, are threatened by famine in southern Sudan. Faced with a worsening situation on the ground, on April 21 the UN World Food Programme appealed to Khartoum for permission to deploy additional Hercules C-130 cargo aircraft to airlift supplies into the famine areas. "The situation in Bar el-Ghazal has reached a critical and frightening level. The threat of thousands of people dying from lack of food and disease is becoming a reality as we anxiously wait for clearances to fly more aircraft," said a spokesman for WFP, adding that with the rainy season starting many roads would soon be impassable. Under increasing diplomatic pressure, on May 2 Khartoum announced it was willing to grant permission for four additional Hercules planes to fly relief supplies out of Lokichokio in northern Kenya and el Obeid in central Sudan "to meet the urgent and dire needs of the people" adding that 10,000 tons of Sorghum was available in el Obeid and Kosti for transport to the south. With the planting season underway, in addition to mounting more airdrops of food relief, the UN plans to use the extra planes to increase deliveries of urgently needed seeds and tools. Meanwhile, WFP has started an emergency food and medical supplies distribution exercise for some 377,500 people in a six-week barge trip along the River Nile. A WFP barge carrying 2,040 tons of cereals and pulses will drop off the urgently needed food supplies in 34 villages. The convoy, the first of three such trips planned for 1998, will also ferry UNICEF's vaccination teams, medical supplies, seeds and tools on behalf of other UN agencies and NGOs. 1,100 tons of food will be dropped-off in Juba, capital of southern Sudan. (AFP, April 3, 13 & 29, May 4; The Monitor/PANA, May 2-3)

**Egypt issues extradition request:** Khartoum for the first time confirmed on April 25 in the London-based Arabic daily *Al-Hayat* that it had received an Egyptian request for the extradition of 17 people being sought in connection with terrorist attacks during the Egyptian-Sudanese joint security committee in Cairo and Khartoum in 1997. The Sudanese interior minister signed the first Arab anti-terrorist convention along with other Arab ministers in Cairo on April 22, called "a draft security agreement". Extradition is one of the areas covered by the accord together with co-operation in the fields of security training and anti-smuggling operations. (AFP, April 25)

**Sudanese government to allow political parties:** The Government of Sudan plans to allow political parties to form if they are committed to the "fundamentals" of a planned new constitution. The holding of a nationwide referendum on the controversial draft constitution began in the provinces on May 1, but the opposition Moslem Brotherhood, in a statement, said the draft law "is not an Islamic constitution because it contradicts the basic Islamic principals". If it passes, the basic law will come into force in June. However, Sudan's southern rebels and northern opposition have both urged a boycott of the referendum which is expected to take 20 days to complete and cost US \$560,000 to organise. According to electoral staff there are 10 million registered voters and for the first time, Sudanese living abroad will be able to vote. (AFP, April 5 & 29, May 1)

**Civilians take refugee in Chad:** Large numbers of Sudanese have fled tribal warfare in west Darfur to Chad, a Khartoum newspaper reported on April 16. The Chadian authorities have set up tented camps for the Sudanese. More than 100 people have been killed this year in clashes over grazing rights, between Arab and non-Arab tribes in Western Sudan. The incidents which occurred between January and March in villages near Al-Ginaina in Darfur province, also left 46 people wounded, according to local government officials. More than two thirds of the 68 villages concerned were burned leaving about 4,000 families homeless. Officials say that a shortage of grazing land in the area was at the root of the problem, which had been exacerbated by the large number of illegal firearms in the hands of local people. South Darfur province was also reported as unsafe as well as South and West Kordofan because of incursions by southern rebels. Elements of the rebel SPLA are accused of killing civilians and of looting 4,000 head of cattle. (AFP, April 16)

**Sudanese factions form pro-Khartoum government:** Sudanese ex-rebels have set up a pro-Khartoum government administration in Juba, the main city in the south, to run southern Sudan for the next four years, under the banner of the South Sudanese Co-ordination Council, until a referendum is held on the future of the territory. (AFP, April 29)

**SPLA releases POWs:** In what is seen as a conciliatory move ahead of the Nairobi peace talks, the Sudan Liberation Army (SPLA) of John Garang said on April 30 that it released 400 prisoners of war during the Muslim Eid al-Adha feast and that more would be released at a later date. However, the SPLA would



continue to detain "dozens" of other prisoners for "legal and security" reasons. The prisoners who would not be freed included prisoners accused of "war crimes" and those who could harm the SPLA by divulging military information to officials in Khartoum. (AFP, April 30)

**Partial agreement with Egypt on confiscated property:** Sudan said on April 28 that it had reached partial agreement with Egypt on the return of property confiscated over the past six years in the latest sign of improved ties between the two countries. Some buildings and installations would be returned immediately while others will be handed back in three months to three years. Sudanese undersecretary Hassan Abdin said no agreement had been reached on a date for returning the Khartoum branch of Cairo University, which was renamed Two Niles University following nationalisation. But the Egyptian Foreign Minister demanded in a statement the "immediate" return of the all confiscated property in line with a promise made by Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir in March. The statement added that an Egyptian delegation which spent 10 days in Sudan last month "to implement a decision by the Sudanese leadership to hand-over Egyptian property found a completely opposite Sudanese position despite the clear and frank agreement". The statement went on to note that Sudan had "failed to implement its special promises to combat terrorism by handing over terrorists involved in undermining security in Egypt". The director of the Two Niles University later said that it would be too hard to return the property and that Cairo should be compensated financially instead. Egypt had earlier demanded that the premises be evacuated in a year, rather than after five years as proposed by Khartoum. (AFP, April 28, May 1-3)

**Ethiopian pilot seeks asylum in Sudan:** On April 30 an Ethiopian Air Force pilot landed with his plane in Hurqah district in the Gezira state southeast of Khartoum seeking political asylum. A Khartoum newspaper *Al Usbu* reported that the Gezira security authorities moved to the scene to question the pilot identified as a captain. Authorities in Khartoum later announced the pilot had been granted asylum and that the plane, a Cessna training aircraft, would be returned to Ethiopia in due course. (AFP, May 1)

**Peace talks resume:** After a short postponement, the peace negotiations between the Khartoum government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) resumed in Nairobi on May 4. The 40-strong government delegation was led by Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail while the much smaller SPLA team was headed by rebel governor of Bahr el-Ghazal, Nhial Deng. The negotiations were chaired by Kenyan Foreign Minister Bonaya Godana. Addressing the public opening session, Gondana said the sides had not reconsidered their positions since the last meeting in November adding that two key issues divided the sides: religion and the demand by rebels for a referendum on self-determination for the south. During the talks the government delegation introduced its April draft constitution as a document for discussion. Rebel delegates, however, told reporters it was nothing short of a "...full-fledged Islamic constitution", which could not be used as the basis for a settlement. The role of Islamic law in Sudan has been a critical point of issue in the war. After three days the talks ended with the government and rebels agreeing on the holding of an internationally supervised referendum for "unity or outright secession" for the south after an interim period, but no date was set. The parties also failed to agree on the area making up southern Sudan, and reached no accord on the separation of state and religion. Though heralded as a significant breakthrough by the Sudanese government and the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), which sponsored the talks, the SPLA branded the meeting a failure saying the government side had not offered anything new. Bonaya Godana was circumspect saying "Probably this agreement does not mean that we are on the edge of a major breakthrough but there is certainly progress". The two sides are scheduled to meet again in three months in Addis Ababa. (AFP, April 25 & May 3, 7 & 10; UN-IRIN, April 16; Press Digest, May 7)

## KENYA

**Gunmen kill Ethiopian diplomat:** An Ethiopian diplomat has been shot dead in the Kenyan capital, in the fifth killing of a foreigner since February. First Secretary Assefa Gebresallasie was shot and his car stolen after robbers approached at the gates of his home in Nairobi's Hurlingham suburb at 10:30 p.m. local time. A retired British policeman was stabbed to death in a national park on February 20, a Russian teacher was shot dead on March 8, a German woman was killed on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast on March 11 and a German aid official was murdered near his home in Nairobi on March 13. (AFP, April 3; The Monitor/Reuters April 4-5)

**Wajir suffers malnutrition and malaria:** According to the Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) Belgium, the population of Wajir town, in Kenya's Northeastern province, are suffering from high levels of malnutrition

compounded by a serious malaria epidemic. Results of a survey conducted last month indicate malnutrition levels of 25.3 per cent moderate and 3.7 per cent severe. MSF estimate that around 1,800 people died of malaria in a six-week period from the end of Ramadhan, January 26. The figures represent a crude mortality rate of nine per 10,000 per day. Access to the area bordering Somalia has been difficult for some months following serious flooding last year and continuing insecurity. (UN-IRIN, April 10)

**Cattle raiding and fighting:** OXFAM has claimed that the prevalence of automatic weapons has turned traditional cattle rustling in northern Kenya into murderous raids in which whole villages can be wiped out. Responding to the threat, local communities regard the possession of modern weapons as their only assurance of security. Rustling is endemic in the arid triangle of land wedged between Uganda, Kenya and Sudan, deepening poverty in an already poor region. The threat of raids from across the Ugandan and Sudanese borders by armed Karamajong and Toposa warriors has depopulated the border regions. According to Peter Gathura, co-ordinator of the Eldoret-based Peace and Rehabilitation project of the National Council of Churches in Kenya, "It's contributed to environmental damage as people concentrate into central places, hence contributing to economic hardship". He added that the heavy fighting in northwest Pokot and Marakwet districts was more than cattle rustling, because now the gangs are using weapons like AK-47 rifles and mortar fire. In a resolution signed on April 21, the two communities agreed that stolen cattle would not be pursued by the owners, but by security personnel aided by leaders selected from both sides. (UN IRIN, April 2 & 22)

**Kenyan airspace "dangerous":** Kenyan air traffic controllers on April 18 complained at their annual meeting held in Nairobi that the country's air space has become dangerous due to poor navigational and communication equipment. The Kenya Air Traffic Controllers Association called upon the government to address the matter urgently, saying that controllers had to put up with obsolete and poorly maintained equipment. One solution posed by the association was for the de-linking of the directorate of civil aviation from the civil service to create a body free from government control. Kenyan air traffic controllers have been fighting for autonomy and better pay since last year when they staged a strike that paralysed air traffic for more than a week. (PANA, April 20)

**Mombassa port congestion to ease:** The Kenyan Ports Authority has taken action to ease congestion at Mombassa port. The move followed a visit to the port by an Ugandan delegation led by Minister for Trade and Industry Abel Rwendire to complain about the delay in moving cargo and goods destined for Uganda. (IRIN, April 22)

**Economy under increasing pressure:** Though a serious economic downturn had been predicted for months, many business people in Kenya appear to be surprised by the scale of the crisis. The withdrawal of assistance from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, both tired by lack of progress on the corruption issue, hit foreign investor confidence and was soon followed by the systematic withholding of bilateral aid by a number of major donor countries. Meanwhile, the all-important agricultural sector has been badly hit by heavy rain and flooding said to be the result of the El Niño phenomena, while an upsurge in ethnic violence has led to the virtual collapse of the tourist industry. With Government spending still increasing, the budget deficit is expected to rise this year to 3.9 per cent of the gross domestic product. Growth, which Finance Minister Simeon Nyachae acknowledges needs to top 8 per cent if Kenya is to progress, is expected to reach no more than 1-2 per cent this year with some business people claiming negative growth is a strong possibility. In its hunt for cash to meet the ballooning deficit the government is issuing Treasury Bills at ever higher interest to pay the interest on previously issued bills. With threats from the finance ministry that the June budget will include draconian measures to cut wages there is the very real possibility of widespread industrial action. Meanwhile, observers say the elite in the ruling KANU party are so obsessed with the issue of who will eventually succeed Moi, the real issues facing the country are simply not being addressed. (from an article by Michela Wrong published in the Entrepreneur, May 7)

## UGANDA

**Bomb attacks kill five in Kampala.** Unidentified attackers bombed two popular restaurants in central Kampala late in the evening of April 4 killing five and injuring five. Two Burundians died in the first attack at the open-air Italian-style Fenice café on the terrace of the Speke Hotel, and three Ugandan waitresses were killed in the second explosion in the nearby Nile Grill. Police said a Ugandan man arrived at the Fenice, put

a bag apparently containing the bomb under his chair, placed his order, then left before it arrived. It is said Ugandan intelligence suspect that a Sudanese-sponsored group with links to the rebel Allied Democratic Front carried out the attacks. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks. (AFP, April 5; The Monitor/Reuters, April 7)

**Investment forum in London, talks in Malaysia:** Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni traveled with a 32-member delegation to London on April 7 to address a forum aimed at enlightening potential British investors to business opportunities in Uganda. The conference, whose theme was "Uganda means business" was organised by the Ugandan Investment Authority, Britain's Department of Trade and Industry and the UN Industrial Development Organization. Accompanied by a 24-member official delegation, from April 15 the President also paid a four day visit to Kuala Lumpur aimed at boosting bilateral ties in Malaysia. (AFP, April 4 and 15)

**FAO-WFP survey shows food shortage:** A food assessment survey carried out by the FAO, WFP, the USAID Famine Early Warning System and Uganda's labor ministry has confirmed that food shortages in most parts of western and northern are expected to persist this year. Over 800,000 Ugandans are said to be affected by severe food shortages. Uganda's food crop sector is not producing the surpluses needed, and a combination of drought, floods, market disincentives and rebel insurgency has severely affected production in a quarter of the county's cultivable land. The report adds that some 563,600 refugees and displaced people will be dependent on food assistance this year. (UN IRIN, April 14)

**Museveni to review ties with Sudan:** Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni told a Kampala press conference on April 22 that Uganda is to review its diplomatic links with its northern neighbour after Sudan was implicated in recent bomb attacks in Kampala. Sudanese state radio "strongly denied" the allegations. Kenya's state-owned *Daily Nation* newspaper also reported Museveni as saying northern Uganda was calm. However in the week to April 14 Uganda's *New Vision* paper claimed that 32 rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army were killed in heavy fighting following the incursion of a group of 400-600 rebels into Kitgum district from southern Sudan. Local officials claimed the rebels were moving into Uganda to avoid the famine developing in Sudan. They later fanned out into both Gulu and Lira districts. Meanwhile, in Geneva, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution presented by Uganda condemning the abduction of children from northern Uganda by the LRA. Supporting the resolution, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Stephen Lewis, said the case was an "ugliness and depravation which is singular". According to UNICEF, between 6,000 and 8,000 children have been abducted over the past five years by the LRA, which forces its victims to perform criminal acts including the murder of other children and adults. (AFP, April 2; UN IRIN, April 24)

**Uganda wins debt service cancellation:** An official source said on April 24 that Uganda had reached agreement with its governmental creditors on a definitive treatment of its debt, making possible the cancellation of 80 per cent of the claims. According to the IMF, Uganda, with one of the strongest performing economies in Africa, will receive nearly US \$650 million in debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Discounted to the current value of the debt on global markets, Uganda's debt relief from all its creditors amounts to \$350 million of which the World Bank and IMF provide \$160 million and \$69 million, respectively. The IMF said that the debt relief amounts to a 30 per cent reduction in Uganda's external debt. (USIS, April 16; AFP, April 24)

**Malaria and cholera:** At least 140 people have died of malaria in Uganda's southwestern district of Kisoro over the past month, the independent *Monitor* newspaper reported. A member of parliament in the area said the death toll could be much higher as many people were dying in the villages, unable to reach health centers. Meanwhile, in northern Arua district health officials have reported the closure of 90 schools in an effort to curb the spread of a cholera outbreak. Also hotels and restaurants with a lack of hygiene have been closed in eastern Moroto district. Twenty people died in three days when an outbreak of cholera swept through camps of displaced people in one sub-county of western Uganda's Bundibugyo district. Health officials say the disease has affected some 600 people in the region with a total death toll of 80 so far. Tens of thousands of local villagers have moved into the camps to seek protection from the rebel Allied Democratic Front which is mounting armed incursions from neighbouring Congo. (AFP, April 27 & May 1)

**Rebel activity brings insecurity:** Insecurity in western Uganda's area has resulted in the displacement of close to 12,000 people, according to WFP's latest Emergency Report. Half of this caseload requires WFP food assistance. Some 30,000 displaced people have already received WFP return packages. The Allied

Democratic Forces (ADF) killed some eight people in Kasese district and other civilians. The ADF fighters have their hide-outs in the Ruwenzori mountain range and operate mainly along the Uganda's border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In the last week of April Uganda and DRC had signed an agreement to step up border joint policing. Meanwhile, in northern Uganda, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels attacked some towns and killed civilians. (*UN-IRIN, April 10; AFP, April 27 & 30*)

## THE HORN OF AFRICA

Horn of Africa Map  
(please contact UNDP -EUE if you would like a copy in \*.tif or \*.bmp format)

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### SOURCES:

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