

## HORN OF AFRICA The Monthly Review

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**This update covers the period July - August 1998**

### REGIONAL ISSUES

#### *Update on the Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict.*

Initial hopes that endorsement of the US/Rwandan peace plan by the OAU and later by the UN Security Council would lead to progress in resolving the dispute were soon proved to be overly optimistic. Though fully acceptable to Ethiopia, the US/Rwandan plan for the neutral demarcation of the frontier has yet to achieve visible progress due to the refusal of Eritrea to withdraw from areas occupied by its forces during initial fighting in May and June. Though both Eritrea and Ethiopia are proceeding to mobilise their forces, attempts to mediate between the two countries continue and there were no serious border clashes reported during either July or August.

On July 2, Rwanda withdrew from the OAU-led "Committee of Ambassadors" team shuttling between Asmara and Addis Ababa in the hope that this would help pave the way for a new peace initiative. The team now includes ambassadors to the OAU from Burkina Faso, Djibouti and Zimbabwe, along with staff members of the OAU's organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution. During much of the month, the committee conducted fact-find missions to both countries holding extensive meetings with government officials to examine the basis for the dispute. Consultations were also held with technical experts, diplomats and representatives of UN and non-governmental organisations in each country. With the two sides holding apparently irreconcilable positions, the OAU team were never expected to achieve any dramatic diplomatic breakthrough; though the process of consultation did appear to go some way to defuse a potentially dangerous situation and certainly helped prevent any further escalation in the fighting.

On August 1 the OAU opened two days of talks in Ouagadougou under the chairmanship of Burkina Faso Foreign Minister, Abasse Ouedraogo. The meeting was convened to consider the report of the Committee of Ambassadors and to "draw up recommendations for the heads of state in the framework of mediation". Delegations from Ethiopia and Eritrea present at the Ouagadougou meeting were led by the respective foreign ministers. Ahead of the formal presentations, Eritrean Foreign Minister Haile Woldensae said his country was ready for direct talks, saying, "We are ready for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and unconditional talks". The Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin made it clear that his country's position was unchanged, "Ethiopia has said clearly from day one that until the Eritrean forces of aggression have left Ethiopia, we will not hold direct discussions with Eritrea." The meeting closed with the OAU reiterating its call for the two sides to continue observing the moratorium on air strikes and to refrain from any action which could further aggravate the situation. On his return to Addis Ababa, Seyoum Mesfin was reported as saying that he was pleased with the Ouagadougou meeting and the OAU report which, "...established beyond doubt the fundamental fact that the disputed Badme and Shiraro [areas] were under Ethiopian administration before the Eritrean invasion on May 6, 1998".

Since the lull in hostilities, both sides have sent high level emissaries to argue their respective cases with neighbouring countries in the region as well to capitals in Europe. Meanwhile, President Museveni of Uganda paid short visits to Addis Ababa and Asmara in an effort to mediate in the conflict as did the Tunisian Secretary of State for Maghreb and African Affairs. Both Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea met with Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi in July to discuss the dispute.

Over the past few weeks, public statements have increasingly focussed on the treatment of nationals in the opposing country, with each side accusing the other of human rights abuses.

Citing national security concerns, the Ethiopian authorities have continued to detain and deport people, particularly those of Eritrean origin who were allegedly active members of the ruling Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice. The number deported has reached several thousands with each side disputing the actual figures. Meanwhile, the government in Addis Ababa says that around 15,000 Ethiopian nationals had been expelled from Eritrea as of the end of August.

On August 18, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi wrote to UN secretary-general Kofi Annan expressing his government's dismay that "the international community has yet to apply the amount of pressure needed to compel Eritrea to withdraw its troops." Meles went on to say, "What we are lacking is the will to pin down the party that is frustrating all the efforts for peace. Unless Eritrea is identified as the country that is not giving peace a chance, and pressured to act, then I fear there is no hope."

Militarily, there has been little or no exchange of fire during July or August at any of the flash points along the common border; indeed there have been no major incidents reported since the June 11 aerial attack by Eritrea on the northern Ethiopian town of Adigrat. However, the mobilisation of manpower and equipment for the war effort has continued and faced with what seems to be a diplomatic deadlock, further clashes would appear inevitable once the main rainy season ends in September/October.

*(AFP, Reuters, Addis Tribune, PANA, BBC, ENA, ERINA and OAU, various dates)*

## DJIBOUTI

**Hassan Gouled visits Pakistan:** President Hassan Gouled flew to the Pakistani capital Islamabad late in August on an official two-day visit. Aptidon was due to hold talks on bilateral and regional issues with Pakistani leaders. Six weeks earlier, Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mohammad Mussa Shehem paid a short visit to Iran. The official Iranian press agency quoted Shehem as saying his visit, "is testimony to the determination of Djibouti to establish co-operation with Iran on the political, economic, and cultural levels." He also said that Djibouti seeks "the contribution of Iran to its economic development projects, particularly in the field of petrol, the construction of a refinery, and [creation] of a free trade zone." *(AFP, July 4, August 27)*

**Opposition journalists freed:** The editor and editor-in-chief of Djibouti opposition newspaper *Le Populaire* have been released after serving two-month prison sentences for inciting tribal hatred. Omar Ahmed Vincent and Aboubaker Ahmed Aouled were jailed over an article that appeared in *Le Populaire*. The paper itself was suspended for three months but appeared sporadically, often with articles written in hand since the police confiscated equipment from the newspaper. *(AFP, July 8)*

**Djibouti port coping well:** Since the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea, Ethiopia has been almost totally reliant on the port of Djibouti for its imports and exports. The port has 15 berths of 3,080 metres total length (400 metres of which is dedicated for the handling of container ships), 14 hectares of free port, 2,450 cubic metres refrigerated storage, 12 hectares of land for containers, and 20 hectares of storage area. "Unloading cargo is not a problem, but there are problems of freight forwarding at the port," says Zewge Gedelu, head of the Ethiopian Private Transistors Association. The Djibouti port is less expensive and less time consuming in unloading cargo unlike Assab, he said. For the moment, cargo destined for Ethiopia is handled by the Ethiopian maritime authority in order to save on hard currency that otherwise would go to private transistors based in Djibouti. The resulting bureaucracy, says Gedelu, is creating some unnecessary delays at the port. Meanwhile, Ethiopia has said it would donate more than 21 million birr (approx. 3 million US dollars) to improve facilities at the port of Djibouti. The port has become vital to Ethiopia since the outbreak of conflict with Eritrea. The funds from the Ethiopian Maritime & Transport Service would be used to buy cranes for lifting heavy cargo and for building warehouses. The additional warehouses are needed to help alleviate the problem of overcrowding at the port. The Djibouti government has begun the process of handing over land required for the warehouse construction. *(The Reporter, July 8; The Monitor, July 2; Ethiopian Herald, July 3)*

**Ethio-Djibouti railway to be restructured.** Ali Abdallah Gadid, the general manager of the Ethio-Djibouti railway has disclosed that the European Commission has asked the company to reduce its staff from 2,500 to 1,300. The reduction is one of the conditions set by the EC as part of the railway's move to modernise. The reorganisation will include the total restructuring of the railways management and technical operations for which the EC has pledged approximately 100 million US dollars. Gadid has pointed out, however, that the railway is not presently in a position to lay off staff due to its poor financial resources. To improve income, the railway is revamping its tracks, buying second-hand locomotives and wagons as well as rehabilitating old ones. The company is also in touch with a number of regular users, such as Mobil Oil, Total and the World Food Programme, to work jointly in the running of the railway. According to Gadid, the company is also thinking of launching a new line of 600 kilometers from Addis Ababa to Djibouti that would not pass through Dire Dawa and not cost more than 120 million US dollars. (*The Reporter*, August 26)

## ERITREA

**Eritrea-Libya co-operation.** Eritrea and Libya have signed a co-operation agreement in the areas of trade, customs, investment, education and culture. According to the Eritrean News Agency, the two parties have formed a high level joint commission which is to pursue the implementation of the agreement. The deal comes shortly after Eritrean president Isaias Afeworki travelled to Tripoli to meet the Libyan leader, Moammer Khadafi. (*The Reporter*, quoting *ERINA*, August 11)

**Eritrea in top 5 percent** The regional director of the World Bank, Ms. Oey Meesook, has told Eritrean national radio, that the country is in the "top 5 percent of nations that enjoy excellent relations with the bank". Meesok also said, "Eritrea has shown rapid economic growth in the past few years". According to a statement released by the Eritrean News Agency, this favourable view of Eritrea's progress has allowed the bank to increase, by three-fold, soft loans extended to Eritrea. The World Bank has also appointed a Resident Representative to Asmara in order to foster relations between Eritrea and the bank. (*ERINA*, August 21)

**How healthy is the economy?** The Eritrean Finance Minister was quoted by the Voice of America as saying that the country has not faced any economic crisis. Opposed to that, other sources do indicate economic difficulties. Reportedly businessmen in Eritrea involved in the foreign trade sector have stopped work due to lack of foreign exchange. Economic observers also believe that the cost of the border conflict with Ethiopia is likely to have a significant impact on finances in the medium term, as resources earmarked for other sectors are diverted into defence. An increase in remittances from Eritreans living abroad may partly offset an increase in defence spending, however. Remittances have the country's major foreign exchange earner since secession. In 1997, the practice brought in as much as 300 million US dollars and recent events are likely to increase these flows considerably as expatriate Eritreans remit funds to help finance the war effort. (*Seven Days Update*, 31 August; *Economist Intelligence Report*, 31 August)

## ETHIOPIA

**Parliament approves 1998/99 budget** The Ethiopian parliament approved an 11.137 billion birr (\$1.61 billion) budget for the fiscal year 1998/99 which began this July. Ethiopia's expenditure for 1997/98 was posted at 10.453 billion birr. Finance Minister Sufian Ahmed said that the government has given special attention to development projects like roads, power supply and agricultural research activities. The government plans to collect 7.6 billion birr in federal revenue this coming fiscal year which represents a 10 per cent increase over the preceding year. The break down of the budget shows that Ethiopia has set aside 995.3 million birr for defence, 332.2 million birr for the social sector, 257 million birr for economic development and 146.7 million birr for foreign affairs. (*Reuters*, *Addis Tribune*: July 7; *AP*, July 8)

**Internet access to be upgraded.** The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation has signed three new agreements - one grant and two contracts - aimed at improving its Internet service and the setting up of

a second satellite station in northern Ethiopia. An ETC statement said a memorandum of understanding was signed July 2 between the Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation, UNDP and ETC to upgrade the capacity of the existing Ethio-Internet service at a cost of around U.S. \$1.3 million, of which \$703,303 would be covered by ETC itself. The corporation also signed a deal with Global One to double Ethio-Internet's existing 256 kilo-bytes IP connection server capacity to reduce problems of congestion and boost Ethio-Internet's capacity to 14,000 subscribers. The agreement with UNDP will help boost bandwidth to one megabyte making possible the provision of dependable Internet service to eight regional towns. The third agreement was with the Japanese company, NEC, for the provision and installation by the end of the year of a second international Earth Satellite Station in Mekele. (*The Monitor*, July 7)

**IMF secures new agreement** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on July 10, it had reached an agreement with Ethiopia to revive the second year of a soft loan worth 30 million US dollars for Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). "The mission had successful discussions with the authorities and concluded an arrangement for the second year of the ESAF," said Ali Abdi, the new IMF Resident Representative in Ethiopia. Any agreement would be subject to the approval of the IMF Board of Directors who would meet within 90 days, Abdi said. An arrangement to disburse around 90 million dollars special drawing rights (SDR) over three years lapsed late last year and the agreement is to revive the second year arrangement for around \$30 million SDR. Reportedly, the agreement came after both sides made concessions allowing for a compromise solution to the previous impasse. The IMF is said to have lifted its demands to have the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) broken up into three or four separate banks, while the Ethiopian authorities are said to have agreed to transfer operations of a purely commercial nature now being carried out by the National Bank of Ethiopia to the commercial banks. (*The Monitor*, July 11-12; *Addis Tribune*, July 17)

**Good coffee harvest expected:** An increase of 3 percent in volume and 12 percent in value is reported in the production of coffee during the first 11 months of this year compared to that of the previous year. According to the Coffee and Tea Development Authority, the harvest rose from 113,321 tons to 133,139 tons and revenues from U.S. \$387 million to \$445.7 million, good news for the country's overall economic situation where coffee revenues represent 60 percent of total export revenues. The increase in coffee production and revenues is officially explained as being the result of good economic control. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter*, July 18; *Ethiopian Herald*, July 26)

**Judicial training in Somali Region:** The Vice President of the Somali Regional State, Adem Abdulahi, pointed out that the state would be taking steps to create a judicial system free from corruption. Opening in mid-August a two-month training for legal professionals in Jigjiga sponsored by the government of Switzerland, a representative of the Swiss Embassy said his government would continue to support efforts to improve the administration of justice in Ethiopia. In a related development, an agreement between Ethiopia and Switzerland for a 2.7 million Birr grant has been announced. The agreement was signed on 3 July at the Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation (MEDaC) and is aimed at strengthening the rule of law, good governance, implementation of fundamental human rights and supporting the performance of the judiciary system in the Somali Regional State. (*Seven Days Update*, 24 August; *Seven Days Update*, 10 August, quoting *Addis Tribune* 7 August)

**Gelgal-Gibe hydroelectric project starts** Following a change in design, the Gelgal-Gibe hydroelectric project has now begun construction. Financed by the Ethiopian government, the first phase of the project will be the construction of a 40 x 1700 metre concrete dam, a 9 kilometer tunnel and a site for the turbines and generators. The World Bank and European Investment bank will finance the remaining part of the project. When completed in 2002, the project will have 3 turbines capable of producing 61 megawatts of power, a 45 percent increase in the country's electrical output. (*Addis Tribune*, August 14)

**Ethnic clashes in southern Ethiopia:** Serious fighting took place in mid-August between the Guji Oromos and the Gedeo people in the south of Ethiopia. Initial reports indicating that about 3,000 people were killed during the ethnic fighting were denied by the government spokesperson who stated that only 140 people were killed in the clashes while around 10,000 had become homeless. The government has sent envoys to mediate between the warring groups. (*Seven Days Update*, 24 and 31 August)

**Ministerial changes:** Dr. Abdulmejid Hussein, the Minister for Transport and Communications, left Ethiopia for Switzerland to take up a new position as head of the Africa desk at UNICEF in Geneva. Abdulmejid, who was also Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League and of the Somali Peoples' Democratic Party (recently created through merger), has served the Federal Government for six years as a minister. A change took place also at the Ministry of Agriculture: The minister, Dr. Seifu Ketema, was internally transferred in early July to head the newly-formed Centre for Ethiopian Agricultural Studies. The successors of both ministers were not yet announced by the time the Horn of Africa Review went to print. (*Seven Days Update, 24 August*)

**Anti-Malaria campaign:** Ethiopia launched at the end of August a one week campaign against malaria which has infected up to two-thirds of the country's 60 million people. The campaign was focussing on malaria prevention activities and education. Peasants living in infested areas were advised to fill ponds with earth and dry out stagnant water. (*The Monitor, 28 August*)

## KENYA

**IMF unlikely to release cash in 1998:** A senior official has said Kenya must meet its promises on taxes and corruption before a suspended International Monetary Fund loan can start again. The 205 million US dollar loan was suspended in July last year when the Kenyan government failed to meet demands to deal with issues of governance and corruption. But Evangelos Calamitsis, head of the IMF's Africa department, said there was a chance that payments on the three-year credit could resume in Kenya's next financial year, which ends on June 30, 1999. (*Reuters, July 2*)

**Moi halves salary:** In a bid to help the country's ailing economy, president Daniel arap Moi has agreed to forfeit half his salary. Cabinet ministers have also agreed to a 30 percent salary cut. Kenya's economy is in a recession with real gross domestic product shrinking in each of the first three months of the year, and high interest rates strangling private investment. (*Reuters, July 15*)

**Terrorists attack US embassy:** The terrorist car bomb attack on the US embassy in Nairobi on August 7 killed at least 250 people and injured over 5,000 more. The US embassy building, and co-operative house office block were extensively damaged, while Ufundi house, a seven-storey building a few metres from the suspected source of the blast, took the full force of the explosion and collapsed. Apart from the cost in human lives, the damage caused to buildings is expected to cost in the region of 500 million US dollars to repair; while the indirect cost of the blast—in terms of professional personnel and infrastructure—will place an added burden on an economy already on its knees. "This is a huge body blow to the economy," said Robert Shaw, a director of the Institute of Economic Affairs. "We have to accept it will have a major effect". Following the arrival of FBI agents from the US to investigate the bombing, a number of suspects were arrested for questioning. Also, a Pakistani travelling on false papers, Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, was returned by Pakistani authorities to Kenya for questioning following interrogation in Karachi. Unconfirmed reports suggest that Odeh, a 33-year-old Palestinian from Jordan, checked into Nairobi's Hill Top Hotel on August 4 along with five accomplices, three of whom later died in the blast. When questioned, Odeh is said to have confirmed that the attack was sponsored by Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, whose group of 4,000 to 5,000 heavily armed international terrorists are said to operate in full-time in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Odeh was later extradited to the USA where he faced indictment for his alleged role in the Nairobi attack. (*Reuters, August 10, 12, & 18; PANA, August 11; AP, September 5*)

**Gender policy to be revamped:** The Kenyan government has launched its first draft of a gender policy document which seeks to address gender disparity in the country. The document released on August 26 will have to be adopted by parliament to become law. It addresses the social and legal status of women, education and training, health, agriculture and food security, industrial development, labour force participation and employment, environmental and political participation. Margaret Githinji, Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs in the National Heritage, Culture and Social Services Ministry said policies pursued in Kenya since independence had not targeted women properly and largely addressed women's reproductive roles only. "They are unfocused and uncoordinated," she complained. (*The Monitor, August 29-30*)

**Teachers' union quarrel:** President Moi's assent for the formation of a new teachers' union has been condemned by the existing Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) as, "provocation aimed at dividing the teachers and the people of Kenya." Ambrose Adongo, KNUT secretary-general added that the news was also "unfortunate having come at a time when deliberations over the teachers pay was in progress". Meanwhile, Moi has called the threat by KNUT to call a general strike on October 5 a overtly political act timed as it is to coincide with the re-convening of parliament on October 6. (*The Nation, August 31*)

## SOMALIA

**Food prospects poor as Gu rains fail:** Following a widespread failure of the main season *Gu* rains in southern Somalia, concerns are growing over possible food shortages in the coming months. Hundreds of farmers and their families are already reported to be moving to the disputed south-central town of Baidoa in search of food following crop failures, a situation which is expected to raise tensions in the town. The UN World Food Programme says the flooding of the Juba and Shebelle rivers which preceded the failure of the *Gu* rains compounded the problem and farmers are expected to harvest less than half what they did last year. The *Gu* harvest represents 75 to 80 percent of the country's annual cereal requirement. Somalia's only other major cereal harvest, coming after the short-season, *Deyr* rains was also a disappointment. With the two harvests combined, WFP estimates Somalia's total cereal production for 1998 at between 160,000 and 170,000 tons - 60 percent less than last year and the lowest figure since 1993. A new emergency operation is planned which will distribute some 5,000 tons of relief food over the next three months to more than 500,000 people. The plan faced a setback on July 16, however, when a WFP convoy carrying 800 tons of food was attacked as it passed through south Moqdishu. Six people were killed in the attack which led to the theft of the food in one truck by "mutinous militiamen" in strongman Osman Ali Atto's United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) faction. (*AFP, July 2, 6 & 16; FAO, July 3*)

**Libya to train and pay police:** Faction leaders Ali Mahdi Mohammed, Hussein Aideed and Osman Ali Ato accompanied by large delegations travelled to Tripoli at the invitation of Libyan leader Moamar Khadafi. It was later learnt that Khadafi had agreed to fund the training and salaries of 6,000 police for the Somali capital Moqdishu as part of a move to support the creation of a joint administration of the war-torn city. The police force will maintain security at Moqdishu's air and sea ports once these are reopened. Previous efforts by Egypt and Italy to try and establish a police force in Moqdishu failed due to inter-Hawiye bickering over power-sharing. Meanwhile, another strongman who did not travel to Tripoli, Musa Sudi Yalahow, declared he would never recognise a joint administration established by his rivals. Yalahow, whose militia are well armed, was formerly Ali Mahdi's deputy in the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA) and is based in the Medina district of the city. Amidst considerable manoeuvring among the different factions for influence in the proposed administration, Yalahow later changed his mind when offered the post of third deputy chairman of the proposed authority. (*The Monitor, July 18-19; AFP, July 12 & 19*)

**Puntland is declared:** On July 23, Darod clans meeting in the north-eastern town of Garowe agreed to establish the Puntland administration to govern a large part of the north-eastern region of Somalia. The agreement came after 71 days of talks. Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), who was appointed as the "president" of Puntland, vowed to make his region peaceful and develop its economy. The Garowe conference also decided that the Puntland administration should have 69 parliamentarians and nine ministers, all of whom would be named within "45 days". Meanwhile, Abdullahi Yusuf's long standing opponent within the Mejeretein clan, General Mohamed Abshir Musa, has refused to recognise "Puntland" and has accused Ethiopia of manipulating the conference and helping to engineer the election of Yusuf as president of the new state. "I don't have any reason to accept the outcome of a lopsided election, during which Ethiopia played a dirty role by awarding incentives to the participants to elect Abdullahi Yusuf," Musa said. Observers at the Garowe conference say that though Puntland will have its own constitution it will fall short of full secession. Under the draft constitution, Puntland will have its own foreign policy, but honour all agreements "legally" signed by the last government of Somalia. Some political commentators say the formation of Puntland, like that of Somaliland before it, is indicative of a trend towards the formation of a number of small and largely independent states within what was Somalia. (*AFP, July 27, 28; Reuters, July 28*)

**Somaliland falls out with UN:** The breakaway "Republic of Somaliland" barred two senior representatives of the United Nations for behaving "like colonial officers ruling a subject people". On July 30, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) confirmed that its representative for Somalia, Swiss national Dominik Langenbacher, and one other official had been declared *persona non-grata* by the Somaliland administration in Hargeisa. The ban on Langenbacher was lifted on August 11. (AFP, July 28)

**Al-Itihad claims further Ethiopian incursion:** According to a spokesman of the Islamic Al-Itihad Al-Islam movement in Moqdishu, Ethiopian troops entered the Gedo region of southern Somalia and captured the village of Bulohawo, close to the Kenyan border town of Mandera. Ethiopia previously attacked and occupied parts of Gedo region in 1996 following a period of insurgency by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) affiliated with the Al-Itihad which maintained rear bases in Gedo. Ethiopia regards the Al-Itihad as a terrorist organisation, but the group firmly denies this, instead describing itself as an "ecumenical group with no violent background". The latest incursion, which has not been independently confirmed, is said to have lasted 24 hours and involved 300 soldiers supported by armoured vehicles and tanks. No was thought to have been killed or detained in the operation. An official of the Marehan-based Somali National Front (SNF) which signed a peace deal with the Al-Itihad shortly before the incursion, said Ethiopian military officials had held meetings with SNF leaders and clan elders in the town before withdrawing to their base at Dolo. As part of the agreement between the SNF and Al-Itihad, the 280 kilometer road between El-Adde and Bulohawo was reopened to commercial traffic for the first time in two years. (AFP, August 6 & 7; DPA, August 7)

**Polio vaccination programme gets underway:** Around 900,000 children under the age of five are to be vaccinated against polio in central and southern Somalia in one of the biggest campaigns in the country's recent history. The campaign, dubbed "To Kick Polio Out of Somalia," is being organised jointly by Somali communities, Somali health workers and NGOs, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and Rotary International. More than 600 vaccination teams will visit all towns, villages and nomadic settlements in two rounds, August 15-19 and September 13-17. A similar campaign in the Northwest and Northeast was successfully concluded last year. (AFP, August 13; UNCT-Somalia, August 20)

**Hussein Aideed warms to Ethiopia:** Following meetings with Ethiopian Deputy Foreign Minister Alamayo Takase in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, it was reported that Moqdishu strongman Hussein Aideed had agreed to end his support for anti-Ethiopian propaganda and insurgency, including his support for armed groups such as the Al-Itihad Al-Islam, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). In turn, Ethiopia has said it would stop supporting Somali warlords opposed to Aideed's United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) faction. Aideed has repeatedly accused Ethiopian in the past of giving military support to his opponents, including training and arming the Rahawein Resistance Army (RRA) who are opposing him in the central Bay and Bakool regions of southwest Somalia. Late in August, Aideed travelled to Addis Ababa for further talks with the Ethiopian leadership, a move that was supported by rival warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammed who said that Aideed was representing the major alliance in Somalia that had signed the Cairo peace agreement in December 1997. Earlier, Aideed had also travelled to Sanaa where he met Yemeni president Ali Abdallah Saleh. (AFP, August 10 & 30)

## SUDAN

**Suspects arrested after bomb blasts:** Security forces arrested a number of people and summoned a number of opposition politicians for questioning for alleged involvement in a number of bomb attacks in the capital Khartoum on June 29. A total of six devices exploded while three others were defused. Among the targets were the Al-Shajarah oil depot, a high voltage electricity tower just outside the capital, and a tower at Khartoum north thermal power station. The explosions happened on the eve of the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1989 coup which brought Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Beshir to power. Without naming names, at a later press conference the interior minister implicitly accused Eritrea of being behind the supply of the devices while the opposition Umma and communist parties were said to

have planted the bombs. Later two people with explosives were also arrested at Khartoum airport. (AFP, July 2 & 3; Reuters, July 4)

**Famine worsens as aid agencies mobilise:** According to a number of aid agencies, the famine in South Sudan is still worsening with an estimated 2.6 million now in need of emergency assistance. According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), donor response to appeals has been poor so far and the agency only has half of the money it needs. WFP calculate that 10,000 tons of food is required every month to avert a disaster. At present, it is able to deliver only half this amount. In May, agencies estimated about 350,000 people, mainly in the south-western province of Bahr el-Ghazal, needed food assistance; now the figure is seven times greater with malnutrition rates running at 60 percent. The UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan, meanwhile, announced it would be increasing the number of children it would be feeding from 14,000 to 38,000 saying, "The major reason for the high rates of child malnutrition is lack of food rather than prevalence of disease". July is traditionally the lean season in South Sudan, while people wait to harvest short-cycle crops of sorghum and ground-nuts in August. But this year, after drought, fighting and more failed rains, there has been no planting in many areas and there may be no harvest at all. At Ajiep, a rebel held town some 50 kilometers from Wau, relief agencies report 120 people dying each day from a total population of 17,500. Among infants under the age of five the death rate was said to be as high as 133 per 10,000 per day as children succumbed to the effects of malnutrition. Following a visit to the famine-hit areas of South Sudan, UNICEF's executive director, Carol Bellamy, complained that she had not seen any soldiers on either side in the same condition as the civilians, which she described as "horrific". The comment highlights the accusation by many relief agencies that food is being diverted to help feed the warring militias. Many agencies see themselves caught in a tragic dilemma, torn between saving lives and prolonging the conflict. But Bellamy responded by saying she rejects "100 percent" the idea that by keeping people alive a crisis requiring a political solution is extended, adding, "We have to go out there and if possible try and at least act in a way that children won't die, that women won't die, that civilians who are caught in this conflict won't die". (BBC, July 7; AFP, July 13, 23 & 27; Reuters, July 25)

**International community increases relief aid:** The German government has announced earmarking of US \$2.9 million to aid civilians in war-torn Sudan during the current year, in addition to which two Transall military aeroplanes have been offered to UN World Food Programme to help in airdrop operations. The French government has committed US \$500,000. The US Government, meanwhile, has already pledged US \$78 million for relief operations in Sudan this year. The Japanese Government has also come through with a pledge of US \$15 million for use by WFP which is delivering humanitarian aid throughout the famine affected area. Other countries including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Ireland and Britain have also pledged assistance. (AFP, July 6, 29; Reuters, July 29; AFP, August 4)

**New constitution hailed as prelude to peace:** The approval of Sudan's new constitution in a popular referendum held in May has been hailed as the prelude to peace. "The new constitution will pave the way for national reconciliation and political dialogue," said Abdel Monim al-Nahas, Chairman of Sudan's election commission. Some 10 million Sudanese voted "yes" to the draft constitution (96.7 percent) and 327,000 voted "no". President Beshir in a speech at the June 24 ceremony announcing the result, said "the vast popular participation" in the referendum "demonstrated a high degree of awareness and response" by the people to the document which he said reflected "the aspirations, hopes and cultures" of the Sudanese people. The new constitution, which came into effect on June 30, automatically invalidates earlier presidential decrees, including a ban on political parties. On July 12, president el-Beshir paid a brief six-hour visit to the southern city of Juba, where he told a rally of army officers the new constitution gave southern people the rights they had fought for. He argued that the constitution, together with the peace pact with ex-rebel splinter groups (primarily Riak Mechar's, South Sudan Independence Movement - SSIM), had handed the people of South Sudan "...the right to self-determination for achieving unity by their choice". (AFP, June 24 & 29; July 13)

**Factional fighting reported ahead of announcement on ceasefire:** Fighting between Riak Mechar's pro-government South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) and rebels led by John Garang erupted in Upper Nile State near the Ethiopian border in mid-July, with some 50 people reported killed. According to the SSDF, in the fighting, troops loyal to Garang's South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had been pushed towards Khor Yabous close to the border. Meanwhile, factional fighting elsewhere has led to attacks and raiding of villages leading thousands of people to flee, many to government-held towns and



relief centres. Over the first two weeks of July, around 2,500 people a day were arriving at the town of Wau, in the famine-struck Bahr El-Ghazal province. On July 15, the SPLA announced a "unilateral and unconditional" three month ceasefire in the civil war to allow aid to reach victims of the famine in Bahr El-Ghazal and Upper Nile provinces. The announcement came after contacts with visiting British foreign office junior minister, Derek Fatchett, who was visiting Nairobi and Khartoum. A day later, the government in Khartoum announced it too would agree to ceasefire on the condition that the SPLA make this comprehensive and not limited to selected areas. Suggestions from the SPLA that the ceasefire be linked with the establishment of road, rail and river "corridors of tranquillity" were viewed cautiously by aid agencies who warned that such routes would traverse areas governed by local warlords who would not respect the truce. It was also noted that with the commencement of heavy rains, many locations could still only be served from the air. Coinciding with the resumption of peace talks in Addis Ababa on August 4, the Sudanese Government later announced that it was unilaterally committing itself to a three-month ceasefire for the entire south of the country, a statement which was first dismissed by the rebel SPLA as a "manoeuvre" but later endorsed by them when the move was welcomed by the UN and a number of western governments. (AFP, July 14 & 16, August 4)

**Peace talks resume in Addis Ababa:** Peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) resumed on August 4, in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. As during the previous round three months ago in Nairobi, the discussions were chaired by Kenyan foreign minister, Bonaya Gondana. At the opening ceremony, OAU chairman Salim Ahmed Salim called for an urgent solution to the "senseless" 15-year-old civil war. "Absolutely nothing can justify a continuation of this conflict" Salim said, adding that the international community was becoming frustrated by the failure of the two sides to reach agreement. Understandably, the current humanitarian crisis was a major theme on the margins of the conference with the government delegation, headed by foreign minister Mustapha Osman Ismail, saying that both the junta and the rebel SPLA should refrain from using famine relief supplies for combatants, or levying taxes on them, and suggesting that monitors from both sides be present at relief loading and unloading stations. On the core political issues, however, the two sides had great difficulty in achieving any convergence at all. At the previous round of talks in Nairobi the two sides had agreed to hold a referendum on "unity or outright secession" for the south but set no date for the poll nor reached any understanding on the area it would cover. In Addis Ababa, arguments continued over the geographical demarcation of South Sudan, with the government insisting that this be decided according to the definition established at independence in 1956 and the rebels saying this should be expanded to include the central Nuba mountains, the southern Kordofan region in central Sudan, and the southern Blue Nile region. There was also continuing disagreement on the question of unity with the government favouring a federal solution and the rebels a confederation. Likewise, the application of Islamic law was a particularly contentious point with the SPLA delegation accusing the Khartoum government of "religious apartheid". With no agreement on any of these points, after two days the meeting appeared to be at the point of collapse. The talks finally broke up on the third day in disarray with the government side rejecting the final IGAD communiqué which made it clear the negotiations had indeed collapsed but committed both sides not to divert relief food meant for famine victims. The negotiations, however, will continue with the two sides pledging to meeting again in Nairobi in six months. (PANA, August 4; AFP August 6; IGAD Communiqué, August 7)

**Opposition groups meet in Cairo:** Leaders of Sudan's umbrella opposition group, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) began talks in Cairo on August 15 to work for the creation of a "new Sudan". Sadiq al-Mahdi, Osman al-Mirghani and SPLA chief, John Garang all took part in the meeting which commenced amidst claims that the NDA was getting close to its ultimate goal: "overthrowing the government ... and restoring multiparty democracy in Sudan". The decision of the Egyptian government to allow the meeting to take place in Cairo immediately created a diplomatic row between the two countries. In condemning the action, the Sudanese ministry of foreign affairs in a statement said, "The Egyptian regime should be questioned about this interference and about its enmity towards the Sudanese people and government". (AFP, August 15 & 18; Reuters, August 20)

**US government launches raid on pharmaceutical plant:** The US government on August 20 launched an air attack on the Al-Shifaa pharmaceutical plant on the outskirts of Khartoum claiming that the factory was being used for the manufacture of the precursors for chemical weapons. One person was killed in the attack which took place at about 7:15 p.m. local time. The Sudanese government later

declared the raid a "criminal act" adding that it would ask the United Nations to set up "a commission to verify the nature of the activity of the plant". Sayed Hamed, managing director of Al-Shifaa, said the plant employed some 360 people and had suffered an estimated US \$100 million worth of damage. He said it was one of Africa's largest plants, producing 30 kinds of human drugs and 23 veterinary medicines. According to Washington, soil samples from nearby had indicated the factory was also producing chemicals used for the production of the lethal VX nerve agent and was connected to international terrorist Osama bin Laden, suspected of instigating the attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The US government said the bombing was "not aimed at the Sudanese government but terrorism" and has indicated to Khartoum that it would seek co-operation on security matters. (AFP, August 20, 21 & 24)

## UGANDA

**Anti-insurgency efforts gear-up as attacks continue.** Early in July it was reported that the Ugandan military had relocated its tactical headquarters in western Uganda to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo in an attempt to wipe out Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels. The new base, Ntabi, is 15 kilometers from the common border. The ADF is a coalition of disparate rebel groups, including an Islamic Tabliq sect, a formerly moribund National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) and ex-soldiers in the ousted Rwandan and Zairean governments. Despite these moves, on August 1, the ADF launched a mass assault on Kasese town in western Uganda, killing at least 12. During the attack, which took place in the early hours of the morning, the rebels first blew-up the town's electricity transformer before storming the town centre where most of the killings took place. A few days later there were reports of a further attack by the ADF, this time on the Kyarumba Trading Centre where up to 33 people were killed. Visiting the scene of the Kasese attack, Museveni later vowed to fight the rebels "night and day" and told reporters that the army was going to be provided with night vision equipment mounted on armoured vehicles and helicopter gunships. Meanwhile, Ugandan government officials have scoffed at demands by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) for the secession of northern Uganda. Member of Parliament Aggrey Awori described the rebels' separatist bid as a "joke" but said it should not prevent the government from engaging in peace talks. LRA leader Joseph Kony has said he would carve out districts in north, northwest and eastern Uganda for his proposed Nile Republic. At about the same time it was reported that a number of Ugandan rebel groups were meeting in the Sudanese capital Khartoum in an attempt to forge a common front. The groups represented included the ADF, LRA the newly revived West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), the former Uganda National Army (FUNA), launched in June, and the Ugandan National Rescue Front II (UNRF-2) which has been fighting in northwest Uganda since 1996. The meeting apparently flopped with no agreement reached. (AFP, July 4 & 6, August 1 & 7; Reuters July 4)

**More bomb attacks.** One person was killed and several others seriously wounded when two bombs went off in the capital on the evening of July 12. The explosions took place in two popular bars in the suburbs of Kampala as people were watching the final match of the World Cup soccer competition on television. Police suspect the bombs were home-made. About a week later, a South African explosives expert defused a US-made grenade bomb that was hurled at central Kampala's Owino market but did not go off. Later in August a bomb on a bus headed to Rwanda exploded causing the deaths of at least 28 people. Bombs on another two buses also exploded killing one person and injuring several. In April, a series of bomb attacks left four dead and many others injured. The government blamed these attacks on the rebel ADF. (AFP, July 13 & 20)

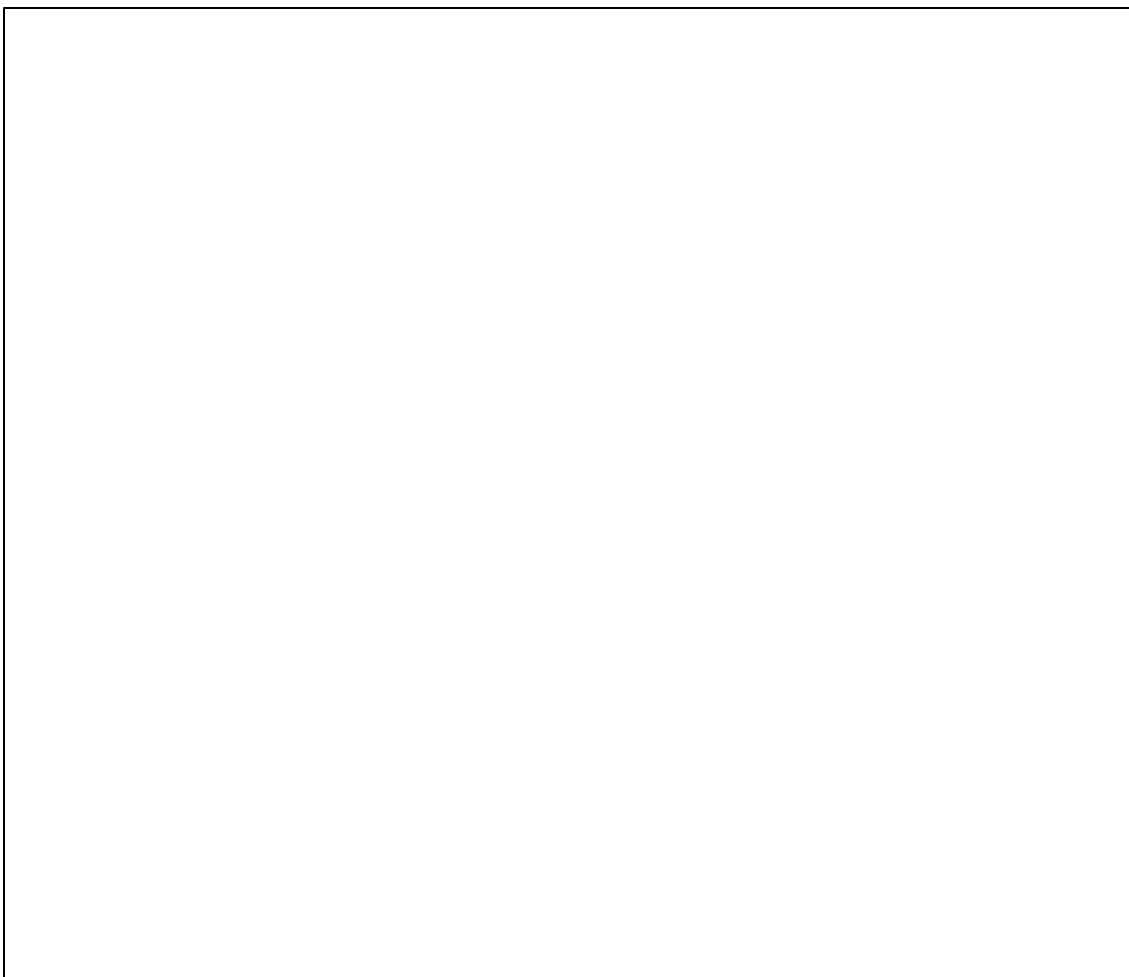
**Museveni elected leader of new "movement".** President Yoweri Museveni has been elected unopposed to head the country's new political umbrella "movement", in what is seen as a step towards transforming Uganda into a one-party (or, "no-party" according to Museveni) state. The Movement—to which all Ugandans must by law belong—will be the chief initiator of national policy. It is a reincarnation of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) which came to power in 1986 after a five year guerrilla war. Museveni says the new Movement would encompass all Ugandans irrespective of their political affiliations, "...in the Movement, everybody wins, nobody loses," he told delegates at a five day national conference in Kampala. On the final day of the same conference Museveni circulated a paper on closer co-operation in Africa where he proposed a union government for east and central Africa to be

responsible for external defence, foreign affairs, common markets and scientific research. In the paper, Museveni wrote that Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi would form the nucleus of the new union, with other countries joining later. "Overnight these countries would be transformed in to a medium power in political, diplomatic, economic and military terms comparable to Iran with a size of 1.6 million square kilometers," Museveni wrote. *(Reuters, July 14; AFP, July 16)*

***Flooding brings threat of cholera.*** A British NGO, ActionAid, has warned that a cholera epidemic and famine are imminent in six Ugandan districts affected by Nile floodwaters. Flood waters have displaced some 20,000 people over a wide area of northern Uganda. Parliamentarians, however, complain the first sign of flooding on the Nile came in early June but government agencies took no action until August. *(Reuters, August 14)*

***Crisis in Congo brings rumours of Ugandan involvement*** Following the uprising of Tutsi rebels against forces loyal to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) president Laurent Kabila, claims emerged that Ugandan troops had been seen entering the northwestern part of the DRC. The Kinshasa government has said that Rwanda and Uganda are fighting alongside the rebel forces who by the middle of August were claiming to control one-third of the country. The claims came as the 14-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) pledged both troop and material support to the Congolese president. Following the pledge, Museveni warned that his country might be forced to intervene in the DRC if other countries became embroiled in the conflict. Ugandan Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya later acknowledged that his country's troops were in the DRC, but said they were there just to defend Uganda's security interests and to create a "buffer zone" to keep the rebel insurgent ADF at bay. Kategaya said that it was not Uganda's policy "to get involved physically" in foreign conflicts and dismissed allegations that president Museveni nurtured ambitions of creating a "Tutsi empire" in east and central Africa. *(AFP, August 19 & 23)*

## THE HORN OF AFRICA



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### SOURCES:

Information in this update has been obtained from official and private media reports, U.N. agencies and NGO sources. No claims are made by the UNDP-EUE as to the accuracy of these reports.

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