

HORN OF AFRICA The Monthly Review

This update covers the period September - October 1998

REGIONAL ISSUES

Update on the Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict.

Though international efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea have seemingly yet to achieve progress, both sides have continued to observe an unofficial ceasefire that has been in place since June 11. Though increasingly tense, the contested border areas have been quiet through much of September and October. Ethiopia warns, however, that though it is committed to the peace process led by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), it is ready to use force if these efforts fail. In a message to the nation on the eve of the Ethiopian New Year (September 10) president Negasso Gidada said Ethiopia had remained patient to give peace a chance but would use force unless Eritrea withdraws its troops. "We are awaiting the decision of the leaders of the OAU" he said, indicating that Ethiopia would continue to call on the international community to put pressure on Asmara to commit itself to the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

In a speech to the UN General Assembly delivered on October 1, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, said his country was trying its best to avoid war in its territorial dispute with Eritrea. "Ethiopia has exerted, and continues to exert, the maximum possible effort to ensure the peaceful resolution of this crisis which was created solely by the Eritrean aggression against Ethiopia and the subsequent occupation of Ethiopian territory." Mesfin went on to condemn international efforts he said were aimed at convincing Ethiopia to accept the loss of its territory in order to avoid war. He said that that would be to "reward aggression". Alluding to Emperor Haile Sellasie's famous but fruitless plea to the League of Nations to intervene on behalf of Ethiopia to prevent the invasion of his country by fascist Italy in 1936, Mesfin warned delegates that the world was in danger of repeating its appeasement of Mussolini if it did not support Ethiopia in its border conflict with Eritrea.

Speaking in turn to the UN General Assembly, Eritrean foreign minister Haile Woldensae said that responsibility for the conflict rested solely with Ethiopia. "This dispute is about borders, pure and simple," Woldensae said to delegates. "I wish to declare here and now, in loud and clear terms, that Eritrea welcomes, and is ready to make an undertaking to implement, a decision by this august Assembly which provides without any preconditions for the cessation of hostilities, a ceasefire agreement and peaceful resolution of the dispute by any method as the only acceptable solution." Woldensae also invited human rights monitors to his country for an "on the spot verification" of the situation in the country.

Toward the end of September it was made public that former U.S. national security adviser Anthony Lake would make a low-key visit to Asmara and Addis Ababa in support of the resolution efforts of the OAU. In a statement, the Eritrean foreign ministry said that President Isaias Afewerki had made clear his reservations but said that he had no objections to meeting the envoy. Following Lake's arrival in Asmara on October 6, Eritrean government officials refused to comment on whether they thought this latest round of shuttle diplomacy stood any chance of achieving a breakthrough in the peace process. After a day of talks in Asmara, Lake arrived in Addis Ababa where he met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other government officials. On Lakes's arrival, U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia, David Shinn, told reporters the trip was the result of "serious concern in Washington over the threat of war between the two countries." Contrary to expectations, Lake later left directly for Washington without making the anticipated second visit to Asmara.

After several weeks of uncertainty, on October 26 the present chairman of the OAU and president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, confirmed that a two-day summit had been scheduled for November 7-8 in Ouagadougou to help resolve the territorial dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and his Djibouti counterpart, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, are expected to join Compaore in presenting a peace plan to the Eritrean and Ethiopian heads of state. "We have to seek proposals quickly that we hope will put an end to this crisis," said Compaore in announcing the Summit. Mediation efforts in June by Rwanda and the United States were followed-up in August by a "contact group" convened under the auspices of the OAU. The initiative presently being brokered by the OAU involves a commitment to resolving the dispute by peaceful means, to define a common border by negotiation, and to demilitarise the entire disputed zone.

On the humanitarian front, on September 25, the Ethiopian government's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) called a meeting of donors, NGOs and international organisations to present an updated account of emergency needs arising from the conflict with Eritrea. In the update, the DPPC requested assistance for a total of 24,970 Ethiopians "expelled" from Eritrea, and quoted needs for 188,690 internally displaced, up from 145,000 given in the June appeal. For those returning from Eritrea, the government has devised a short- and medium-term programme to help the group quickly reintegrate in the country and restart their normal lives through a "relief-rehabilitation package" that comprises transport assistance from reception centres to home areas, basic food rations for nine months, various household items, blankets, clothing and a one-time cash grant of approximately US \$200.

A few days before the appeal update, the US government signed an agreement with Ethiopia for the provision of 16,000 metric tons of relief food and 36,000 blankets valued at US \$10 million for people displaced by the conflict with Eritrea. At about the same time, the Italian government donated an additional US \$230,000 worth of blankets, shelter and water supply materials along with different types of emergency items to help the displaced people of the conflict. The Italian government has donated a total of about US \$440,000 to date. Other contributions include a donation by representatives of Ethiopians residing in the U.S., Europe and the Middle East who paid a visit to Ethiopia and presented a check for US \$768,279 to the DPPC.

Meanwhile, both countries have continued the exchange of people that has become a feature of the dispute since hostilities began in May. By the end of October, the authorities in Addis Ababa said that more than 30,000 Ethiopians had returned home from Eritrea, 12,763 crossing through the northern province of Tigray adjoining the border, 17,417 crossing via Bure on the border adjacent to the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab, and 66 entering via Djibouti. Asmara claims a similar number of its nationals have been expelled from Ethiopia during the same period.

(sources used: AFP, Reuters, BBC News, PANA, ENA, ERINA, WIC, AP, Ethiopian Herald, Reporter, DPPC)

REGIONAL

Tribunal decision on Hanish islands: The international tribunal, set up to arbitrate on the dispute between Eritrea and Yemen, over a group of islands in the Red Sea issued its ruling at the Hague on October 9. The dispute arose in 1995 when Yemen announced its intention to develop Greater Hanish island as a tourist resort. The underlying reason, however, appears to be the island's strategic location near international shipping lanes, and reports of lucrative oil reserves in their surrounding waters. The tribunal decided that the Mohabbakah islands, Sayal, Harbi, Flat, High, Haycock and the South West rocks would henceforth fall under Eritrean sovereignty. Meanwhile, all the islands, islets, rocks and low-tide elevations of the Zuqar-Hanish group, and all the other islands northwest of Hanish, would from now on fall under Yemeni sovereignty. The sovereignty found to lie with Yemen entails the perpetuation of the traditional fishing regime in the region, including free access and enjoyment for the fishermen of both Yemen and Eritrea. The arbitration process now enters the second phase. This involves the demarcation of international air space between the two countries. Following the initial decision, Yemen announced that it was ready to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries and forge new cooperation on

all fronts including transportation, air cargo, minerals and fisheries. Meanwhile, Eritrean foreign minister Haile Woldensae said the peaceful solution to the dispute will strengthen the relationship between the two countries. (*Reuters, October 9 & 13; AP, October 13*)

TICAD II: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has met with Japanese State Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to express his appreciation of Japan's continuing aid to Ethiopia. Meles also commended the Japanese state secretary for the Second Tokyo International Conference of African Development (TICAD-II) which he said demonstrates Japan's commitment to working with African nations for the common goal of poverty eradication. The third preparatory committee meeting for TICAD-II took place in Addis Ababa on September 7 and 8. The gathering finalized the "draft agenda for action" focusing on human development, empowerment of women and private sector development including industrial development. According to the coordinators, the conference will enhance partnership between Asia and Africa. The TICAD-II meeting will be held in Tokyo October 19-21, 1998. (*Ethiopian Herald, September 8*)

Ethiopia - Sudan to restore air links A visiting Ethiopia transport delegation has met with their Sudanese government counterparts to finalise arrangements for the restoration of air links between the two countries. According to Sudanese TV, Hamid Muhammed Ali Toren, the Sudanese aviation minister was briefed during the visit on the final arrangements being made for Ethiopian Airlines to make twice weekly flights between the two capitals commencing October 30. (*various sources*)

ETHIOPIA

National Bank adopts new policy: The National Bank of Ethiopia has adopted policy changes for the 1998/1999 fiscal year that it believes will help to develop the financial capacity of the country. The new policy seeks to decentralise the issuance of import and export licenses (except coffee), and to devolve management of foreign exchange, and hard currency allocations and revenue administration from the central bank to government and commercial banks. Other changes include: the removal of restrictions on the amount of foreign currency loans for Ethiopians who go abroad for medical treatment, education and trade and business tours; a new facility for foreign nationals who work in Ethiopia to send their net salaries abroad in foreign exchange; the value of government treasury bills to be determined by market price and a reduction of the minimum denomination of bills from 50,000 to 5,000 Birr; and the new capacity of commercial banks to buy and sell foreign exchange freely. In another announcement the National Bank declared that Ethiopia earned 10 billion birr (one US dollar = 7.25 Ethiopian Birr) in hard currency in the last budget year from export goods and other services. This marked an increase of 1.5 billion birr from the previous budget year. The increase was attributed to an increase in the coffee exports and the rise of the price of commodity in the international market. (*DPA, September 1; The Ethiopian Herald, September 1 & 2*)

Hard currency earnings The National Bank of Ethiopia declared that Ethiopia earned 10 billion birr in hard currency in the 1990 budget year from export goods and other services. This marked an increase of 1.5 billion birr from the previous budget year. The increase was attributed to an increase in the coffee exports and the rise of the price of commodity in the international market. (*Ethiopian Herald, September 2*)

Ethiopia purchases 10 MIGs: The Israeli firm Elbit has agreed to sell 10 upgraded MIG-21 fighter jets to Ethiopia. The deal, which needed approval by the Israeli government, has now received the go ahead. The first jet is expected to arrive within a year by which time Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu believes the current conflict with Eritrea will be over. (*The Addis Tribune, September 10*)

Afar parties to merge: The merging of four political organisations in the Afar State has received the backing of Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The 4 organisations are: the Afari People Democratic Organisation (APDO), the Afar National Liberation Front (ANLF), the Afar National Democratic Movement (ANDM), and the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF). In a similar move, the merger of the Gambella's People's Liberation Front (GPLF) and the Gambella's People's Democratic Unity Party (GPDUP) has taken place. The new party is called Gambella's Peoples Democratic Front. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 2; The Reporter, September 3*)

Ethiopian opposition groups meet: The Organization of Ethiopian Opponents met in Paris, September 10 –13. However, the largest opposition group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), refused to attend the meeting due to dissent among its ranks with regard to the Ethio-Eritrean conflict. The All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) also declined to attend the meeting because of internal problems. The group of opponents from Ethiopia were led by Beyene Petros who led a joint delegation of representatives from Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE) and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC). Most of the political organizations were represented by expatriates in exile. (*ION, September 5*)

UNDP to intensify assistance. In talks held between the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and President Negasso Gidada, Mr. Ahmed Raffeeuddin said that UNDP will press ahead with its support to bolster the country's health, rural development, provision of potable water and capacity building efforts. Raffeeuddin said UNDP has a sound and smooth relationship with Ethiopia, and reiterated UNDP's readiness to back the government's development efforts together with other international organisations. UNDP is currently undertaking various programmes in the country including poverty eradication, women's empowerment, environmental protection, and consolidation of governmental institutes. (*Ethiopian Herald, September 9*)

31 high ranking Dergue officials released: As a goodwill gesture on the eve of Ethiopia's new year (September 10), the special prosecutor's office announced the release of 31 high ranking Ethiopian army officers imprisoned since the fall of Mengistu's regime. The prisoners had been charged with committing genocide, war crimes and murder during the former dictatorship. Nine were freed on bail, and the others unconditionally. According to sources, over a seven year period the SPO had thoroughly investigated the individual cases but had found that there was insufficient evidence to press charges. In the private press some reports claimed that the former *Dergue* officers had been released to help with training in the armed forces. (*AFP, September 9; The Ethiopian Herald, September 11; Reuters, September 10*)

New aid agreements signed: Ethiopia and the Netherlands have signed two grant agreements amounting to US \$12.96 million. \$8.96 million will be used for the execution of part of the Addis Ababa Sewerage Project. The balance will be used to procure essential drugs for the 1998 programme to improve the health of the Ethiopian population in the long term. Meanwhile, Japan has signed three grant agreements with Ethiopia totaling US \$37.7 million. \$21.5 million will be used for water supply development in the urban centres, \$6.4 million to reinforce the power distribution network in Addis Ababa and the balance of \$9.8 million to meet the first part of a \$77.9 million grant allocated for the rehabilitation of the Addis Ababa-Debre Markos trunk road. The Japanese State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed that this would be the largest Japanese grant aid project undertaken in the Middle East or Africa. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 8 & 11*)

Human Development Ranking: Ethiopia ranks 169th in overall human development according to the 1998 UN Human Development Report that was launched on September 9. The ranking takes longevity, knowledge, and standards of living into account. The report was launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). One hundred and seventy four countries took part with Canada receiving the highest ranking and Sierra Leone the lowest. (*The Monitor, September 10; Addis Tribune, September 10*)

Embezzled funds blocked: The Swiss Supreme Court has blocked the transfer of US \$8 million, money allegedly embezzled by Ethiopia's former deputy prime minister, Tamirat Layne. The court decided that the funds cannot be transferred as requested by Ethiopian authorities until a decision is passed on Tamirat and his female friend (who deposited the money in the Swiss account) by the Ethiopian Supreme Court. The Swiss court also requested that the Ethiopian authorities ensure that the woman be well treated and that the Swiss ambassador in Addis Ababa be allowed to visit her freely, make inquiries about her case and be present at hearings. With eight others, Layne has been charged with embezzling a total of US \$16 million. The Swiss police have given Ethiopian authorities some bank documents relating to the embezzlement charges and they have said that they will give more documents to the Ethiopian authorities as soon as they can come up with human rights assurances demanded by the Swiss federal tribunal. (*The Reporter, September 15; The Monitor, September 15; AFP, September 18*)

Indigenous bio-diversity to be protected: The Ministry of Agriculture announced that Phase II of a multi-year project to preserve and develop indigenous plant resources is scheduled to be undertaken at a

cost of 15.3 million birr (US \$2.1 million) in the new Ethiopian year. The project will cover some 700,000 square kilometers of the country. The registration of forest plants and gathering of socio-economic data have already been carried out in Gojjam and most parts of Gondar; while Welo and North Shewa zones are targeted for the 1998/99 year. In related news, at a workshop on bio-diversity, the Director General of the Ethiopian Agricultural Organisation (EARO) called on conservationists, researchers, and communities to effectively conserve and utilise the resources of the Rift Valley Lakes, as part of Ethiopia's bio-diversity conservation and research strategy. (*The Ethiopian Herald*, September 4 & 16)

US 31 million invested by World Vision: World Vision International announced that it has allocated 226 million birr (approx. US \$31 million) for development activities in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' states and Addis Ababa City Administration. The development projects focus on agricultural, health, forestry, water supply, irrigation development and other sectors. It is expected that the 3 million people who will benefit from the projects will contribute 5-10% of the cost. The organization stated that it has also devised a project to rehabilitate the displaced citizens of the Ethio-Eritrean conflict. In related news, the executive board of World Food Programme (WFP) has disclosed that Ethiopia has made proper use of the aid the organization has granted it so far. The WFP regional director, Mr. Mohammed Zejjari, stated that the organization plans to provide 216,000 metric tonnes of food aid to strengthen food security and development in Ethiopia through a five-year programme (1998-2003). (*The Ethiopian Herald*, September 3 & 23)

European Union opens food aid tender: The European Union's executive commission has opened a food aid tender for the supply of 25,000 tons of common wheat to Ethiopia. The aid will be supplied through the Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP). This is the second food aid tender from the EU in two months with the first having taken place at the end of August for the supply of 13,735 tons of wheat. (*Reuters*, September 22; *The Monitor*, September 24)

Code of conduct for NGOs: A code of conduct for NGOs was adopted and ratified in a consultation meeting held at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. About 150 NGOs participated in the meeting. The Chairman of the Legal Committee of the House of People's Representatives, Ato Abdulaziz Ahmed, said that the efforts of the NGOs to voluntarily establish a minimum standards of conduct will result in better productivity and has the full backing of the Ethiopian government. (*Ethiopian Herald*, September 25)

More farmers to benefit from development package: Over 140,000 peasants will be involved in various extension packages in 1998/9 in the Wag Hamra and Central Tigray zones of northern Ethiopia. The extension packages will focus mainly on the production of linseed, peas and lentils, as well as on afforestation and animal husbandry. In other parts of the country, over 8,300 tons of fertilizer has been distributed this year to farmers in the extension and regular farming activities in the east Wollega zone while over 39,500 tons of fertilizers and select seeds were distributed to farmers in the Southern Peoples' region as part of the current extension program. (*Ethiopian Herald*, September 3, 4 & 13)

HIV-AIDS cases under-reported: The Ethiopian Ministry of Health says that an estimated 2.5 million adults are believed to be infected with the HIV virus. The number of reported cases currently stands at 61,270. The United Nations AIDS agency estimates that more than 9% of Ethiopia's adult population is infected which makes Ethiopia the third country in the world in terms of percentage of population infected. The head of the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute, Dr. Hailu Yeneneh, said that unless the problem is controlled soon, AIDS would become a major epidemic. Ethiopia cannot afford the cost of AIDS treatment and must therefore focus on prevention. Experts agree that the first part of prevention would be making the populace aware of the personal risk factor, which is not fully appreciated at this point. The cabinet has recently approved an anti-AIDS policy of preventive measures. Part of these measures consist of the setting-up of voluntary screening centers to detect carriers of the AIDS virus. (*The Monitor*, September 11-12; *The Ethiopian Herald*, September 16; *AFP*, September 20)

1994 census update: The Central Statistics Authority released the complete data of its 1994 population and housing census which reflects socioeconomic conditions including population size, age, fertility, and mortality rate. The census indicated that the population of Ethiopia is 59,882,000 with an annual growth rate of 2.92 percent, that females makeup 49.7 percent of the population and males makeup 50.3 percent, and that of the percentage of the population that is literate and between 15 and 64 years of age

is 79 percent. The Central Statistics Authority said that release of the complete data was delayed due to the difficulties encountered in conducting the census in the Afar and Somali states. (*The Ethiopian Herald*, September 19)

TB is number one killer: Ninety thousand new cases of tuberculosis have been detected in Ethiopia. A senior expert disclosed at the annual review meeting of the National TB and Leprosy Control Programme, that TB claims the lives of about 45,000 people annually. The expert noted that a treatment plan has been launched in several of the national states to prevent the further spread of the disease. (*The Monitor*, September 23)

Belgium grants \$4 million in debt relief: In a press release, the Belgian embassy disclosed that US \$4 million in debt relief would be geared towards support for development projects instead of paying the debt. However, the terms of exchange still remains to be discussed between the Belgian Administration for Development Cooperation (BACD) and the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDAC). The Belgian Charge d'Affairs disclosed that the projects were under discussion. In the same press release it was announced that Belgium has granted \$815,000 in emergency drought relief following an earlier appeal for assistance made by the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission. (*Addis Tribune*, September 25; *The Reporter*, September 30)

Serious flooding reported: The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission reported that 15,600 people were encircled by the river Awash when it overflowed its banks in September. The mainly nomadic people at Awash Dit Baheri who were cut-off received 9.15 tons of emergency food and 198 cartons of biscuit ferried to them by helicopter. Similarly, in the Gambella region, 66,404 people were forced to leave their homes temporarily when the river Baro overflowed. Emergency assistance was delivered to the people by truck and boat. Similarly, flooding of the river Tekeze in Humera affected some 1,342 people who received emergency food, biscuits, kitchen utensils, clothing and tents from the DPPC. (*The Reporter*, September 30)

ERITREA

Khartoum hosts opposition congress: At a congress held in Khartoum, the Eritrean opposition group, Harakat al Jihad al Islami (Eritrea Islamic Jihad Movement) changed its name to Harakat al Khalas al Islami (Islamic Salvation Movement). The movement has been seeking the forceful overthrow of Eritrea's government and its replacement by an Islamic government. Sudanese authorities indicated their official support of the movement when they allowed the HKI Secretary-general Sheikh Mohamed Amer to hold a news conference in Khartoum. (*ION*, September 5)

Isaias visits Libya: President Isaias Afewerki leading a small official delegation flew to Tripoli, Libya to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the revolution and also to congratulate Colonel Moamer Qadhafi on his recovery from a hip operation. Though in apparent contravention of the United Nations embargo on flights, the trip was in accordance with a resolution agreed at the June OAU summit which authorised flights to Libya for humanitarian, religious or diplomatic purposes. (*The Monitor*, September 8)

Sudanese opposition seek peace: Former ousted Prime Minister and leader of the banned opposition Ummah Party, Mr. Sadiq al-Mahdi, arrived in Asmara, Eritrea on September 6 leading a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) goodwill delegation to seek a peaceful solution to the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. (*BBC*, September 9)

Findings of the ELF committee: The Revolutionary Council Management Committee of the Eritrean Liberation Front wound up its meeting in mid-August by putting out a document condemning both the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments for their part in the Ethio-Eritrean border dispute. The committee concluded that the Badime zone in question belonged to Eritrea historically and that the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had worked together during the country's civil war to drive out the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and hand the territory over to the TPLF. The document called for a peaceful solution of the current conflict. (*ION*, September 5)

Exploring for gold: Two Australian mining companies, Dragon Mining and Genesis Resources, working with the Hong Kong-based Investment group, Africa Wide Resources, are seeking a gold exploration permit in northern Eritrea covering 400 square kilometers in the Zara region. The three will split the costs once exploration starts and if profits are made. The Eritrean government will get five percent participation. About fifteen foreign companies presently hold exploration permits in Eritrea. (*ION, September 30*)

DJIBOUTI

A combative FRUD faction: The opposition party, Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), which was an active opponent of the Djibouti government until the signing of a peace agreement in 1996, is becoming active again. Some members of FRUD, "the silent majority" according to the new anti-government pamphlet called "*Liberté Plus*" distributed by an Afar underground movement, feel that the armed struggle against the government should continue and are calling for the creation of an anti-regime power struggle. The combative FRUD faction is considered by some observers to be the only reckoning force the Djibouti regime faces today. (*ION, September 5*)

Charges of a coup plot: A former justice minister and a former defense minister who belonged to an opposition group, *Group pour la Démocratie et la République*, have been charged with inciting a campaign of disobedience within the army and in attempting a coup along with 15 soldiers and a retired gendarme. The basis of the prosecution's charges seem to be the fact that the former ministers belonged to the same clan as the allegedly "mutinous" soldiers. The defendants were denied the defense counsel of their choice when their French lawyer was denied permission to plead in Djibouti. When other lawyers refused to represent them under these conditions, the acting president of the Djibouti Bar assigned a lawyer to them a few hours before the trial. Their counsel was denied a motion for postponing the hearing to be able to mount his defense. The two former ministers were each given a 12 month suspended sentence, two years probation, and fined one million Djibouti Francs. Two officers were each given six month suspended sentences, and fined 300,000 DF. The other defendants received suspended prison sentences except for one who was discharged. (*The Monitor, September 8; ION, September 30*)

SUDAN

U.S. under sustained criticism: Although Washington claimed that its bombing of the El Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant was justified because it was manufacturing precursors for VX nerve gas and was partly financed by Osman bin Laden, the man accused of masterminding the embassy bomb attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, some members of the international community do not share the same views. China has expressed her "deep disturbance" over the missile attacks as did the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which announced that it supports Sudan's request for a UN inquiry into the bombing. The French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vardine, has also expressed his skepticism that the pharmaceutical plant was producing chemical weapons. Meanwhile, the New York Times has reported that some top US officials believe that the decision to bomb the plant was based on unconvincing evidence. The paper also reports that US officials had no evidence directly linking Osman Bin Laden to the plant. Even former US President Jimmy Carter has called for an investigation into the attack on the factory. In related news, Sudan's Ambassador to Washington has asked that the US admit that it made a mistake in bombing the plant. "If that is done, it will open all the pages of establishing a proper and correct relationship with the US," he said. Meanwhile, Sudan's President, Omar Hassan al-Bashir has formed a committee to look into the ownership of the El Shifa Pharmaceutical Industries Co. Plant. The *Al-Jumhouria* daily reported that the committee is expected to investigate how it was set up, financed and how the ownership changed hands. (*The Monitor, September 1 & 3; AFP, Sept. 2, 5, 9, 10, 18 & 21*)

Sudan disregards UN air embargo: A Sudan aircraft carrying an official government delegation sent to attend the anniversary of the September 1, 1969 coup that brought Colonel Moamer Qadhafi to power, landed in Tripoli in violation of the UN air embargo on flights to Libya. The embargo had been imposed on Libya following its refusal to hand over for trial two Libyans suspected in the 1988 bombing of US plane

over Lockerbie, Scotland. Several African nations, including Eritrea, have disregarded the UN air embargo recently. (AFP, September 1)

Shelling from Eritrea: Artillery shelling from Eritrea is believed to have displaced more than 55,000 Sudanese, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Two children were killed and twelve people wounded in a recent attack on a refugee camp 20 kilometers from the eastern Sudanese State of Kassala. The towns of Lafa, Guissa, Abu Alga, Awad and Harafat were also reported to have been affected. The IFRC/RCS reported that the shelling had been continuing since January and that the renewed attacks have created a new wave of the displaced. The majority of the displaced are now threatened by disease and a lack of basic necessities, and fighting in the past few weeks has caused many to move for a second time. Eritrea has denied any such attacks. (IFRCS, September 1; IRIN Update, September 1 & 21)

Aid being diverted: A UN team investigating food relief distribution announced that food sent to Sudan's famine victims was being diverted to feed soldiers. The food found its way to the soldiers in the form of looting or "tayheem," a traditional Sudanese taxation system through which the hungry civilians give food to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army. (The Monitor, September 11-12)

Egypt and Sudan are mending relations: Sudan's President Omar al-Beshir said he was determined to defuse tensions between Sudan and Egypt. This comes following Egypt's recent moves to warm relations between the two countries. Egypt criticized the US missile strike against the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant, which positively influenced the Arab League to unanimously denounce the strike; it also offered US \$300,000 worth of humanitarian aid to Sudan in August and sent a plane loaded with jute and tents to Sudan's flood victims. A plane load of food, medicine, other supplies together with a medical team is due to arrive soon. (AFP, September 13 & 17)

Sudan sends troops to Democratic Republic of Congo: Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman disclosed that Sudan is willing to offer Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila "political" support. He explained Sudan's stance by saying that Kabila is the legitimate leader of DRC and Sudan believes that other countries should not try to change that. Uganda's state owned New Vision newspaper reported that Sudan has sent 2,000 soldiers including 700 Ugandan rebels to aid forces loyal to Kabila to fight the Tutsi rebels. (AFP, September 15, 16 & 21)

Internal conflicts continue: The general cease-fire, which had been observed since July in southern Sudan to allow emergency relief to reach famine victims, is no longer operational. Fighting between government and rebel groups has intensified with several attacks and counter attacks reported by both sides. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) announced that it had started attacking government positions in various locations and taken the Al-Jabaleine government garrison near the main town of Juba. It also launched simultaneous attacks on the Liria and Torit garrisons and a separate one on Al-Jalabeine, which it claimed was in retaliation for an air raid on Labone and Yei by the Sudanese military. The SPLA has since reported that Liria has fallen under their control. The rebel Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF) disclosed that they have killed 20 government soldiers in an attack south of the Roseires in the Blue Nile province. Roseires is the site of a hydroelectric plant that supplies Khartoum with 90 percent of its electrical power. Both the SPLA and the SAF belong to the umbrella opposition group called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which seeks to unite rebel forces from the mainly Christian and animist south and the Arab and Islamic north. Meanwhile, Sudan continues to accuse Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia of aiding the south Sudanese rebels. All three have denied any involvement. Meanwhile, it is reported that at least 400 people have been killed in fighting since late August between forces loyal to Riak Mechar, head of the Southern States Coordination Council, and Paulino Mateb, another southern faction leader. The fighting has taken place in the oil-rich Bentiu area, 650 kilometers southwest of the capital. Recently, the Sudanese government put the country in a general state of mobilization to confront what it called an attack by Uganda forces in the south and "other conspiracies" the country is facing. In taking the decision, the Council of Ministers called on Sudanese working abroad to participate in the mobilisation by donating blood and cash to support the country's efforts. (AFP, September 10 - 28; The Monitor, September 29; IRIN Update, September 18; AP, September 15)

EU should do more to end civil war: A senior European Union (EU) official, Alberto Navarro, said that the EU should do more to end the civil war that has claimed 1.5 million lives and displaced 4 million

people. Navarro said that the European Commission and the 15 EU member states had committed US \$150 million, most of it as humanitarian aid to the war-torn south. The director of the Brussels based European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) visited rebel and government occupied areas in the south and had talks with Sudanese officials in Khartoum. He also held talks with rebel representatives in Nairobi. Navarro called on the two warring sides to attend a meeting on humanitarian aid in Nairobi from October 5 to 7 called by the United Nations to discuss an extension of the cease-fire which was due to expire on October 15th. With heavy fighting reported from East Equatoria, however, Sudan's minister of state for social planning, who is responsible for relief operations in the south, told reporters the meeting had been postponed saying that his government believed it was not suitable to discuss an extension of the ceasefire while two IGAD members, Uganda and Eritrea, were accused of supporting and participating in the fighting. The Khartoum government also lodged a complaint with the UN Security Council against Uganda and Eritrea over the alleged intervention. Both sides in the conflict later announced extensions to the ceasefire, with the SPLA saying it had expanded the ceasefire to include the Western Upper Nile region, while the government in Khartoum announced a three month extension covering famine-hit Bahr al-Ghazal region. The moves were welcomed by the Operation Lifeline Sudan grouping of UN and other relief agencies. (*AP, AFP, September 22; AFP, October 5 & 12; OCHA, October 5*)

Severe floods wreak havoc: Following serious flooding in northern and eastern Sudan, Hussein al Obeid, chief of the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) has appealed for international aid amounting to US \$19.5 million. The Commission has already sent aid to some of the flood victims in the form of plastic sheeting, sorghum, tents and medicine. The Geneva-based International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC/RC) said that it is looking for US \$2.1 million to support rescue programs for 95,000 of the most needy. So far, 119,000 homes along with 95 schools, 60 health institutions and more than 3,000 acres of farmland have been destroyed leaving 204,000 families without shelter according to the Humanitarian Aid Commission. It is feared that waterborne diseases could create an epidemic. Sudan has requested for Egypt to open the Aswan High Dam to drain some of the Nile water flooding northern Sudan. The flooding has been caused by sustained heavy rains in the highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea during August and September. (*The Monitor, September 3, 8 & 10; Reuters, September 1; AFP, September 1-10; IRIN Update, September 1*)

More relief aid for Sudan: Kuwait, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Syria have sent various forms of aid to Sudan's flood victims by plane. Meanwhile, the World Food Programme's massive airlift programme is going a long way in reducing the number of famine deaths in Sudan. Four Ilyushin aircraft each with 32 metric tons capacity, eight C-130s capable of carrying 16 tons and six buffalo's with a capacity of 6 tons each have been making daily trips to Khartoum, El-Obeid (Sudan), Nairobi and Lokichokio (northern Kenya). Presently, the World Food Programme is providing food aid to 2.6 million Sudanese, 10 percent of the country's total population. WFP is making appeals to the Khartoum government and southern rebels to prolong the cease-fire agreement so that more of the desperately needed aid can be delivered to the victims. Five African countries, members of the Community of Sahelian-Saharan States (COMESA), dispatched two aircraft of humanitarian aid to Sudan's flood victims from Tripoli. (*AFP, September 11 - 21; The Monitor/Reuters, September 5-6*)

Sudan wary of Nile water sharing: Sudan's minister for irrigation and water resources, Sharif al-Tuhami, has told Reuters news agency that any changes made to the Nile sharing accords should not encroach upon the rights of Egypt and Sudan - referring to a water sharing agreement that was signed between Egypt and Sudan in 1959. Ethiopia, the source of the Blue Nile, does not recognize this agreement. Sudan warns that any changes that Ethiopia wants to make to its share of water consumption should be put on the table for discussion. Ethiopia is an observer at regular meetings of Nile basin states which meet to discuss water use of technical data. The remaining Nile basin states are Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya and Sudan. Sharif al-Tuhami also said Sudan was planning to build three hydroelectric plants across the Nile in the north. The dams would be financed and built by foreign companies who would operate them selling the power at commercial rates. (*Monitor, September 3; Addis Tribune, September 4*)

SOMALIA

Somalia faces serious food shortages: World Food Programme (WFP) announced that Somalia faces its worst food problem in five years, which will threaten the lives of thousands of Somalis. The reasons for the very poor harvest this year included El Niño flood waters which damaged crops in the Juba and Shabelle river areas; infestation by rats, crickets and other pests; a lack of replacement seeds; and heightened insecurity. WFP plans to increase its food aid to over 20,000 tons in the period between August to March next year. (UNCT Somalia Monitor, August 27 - September 10)

Somali refugees return home: A further 3,000 Somalis from the Ethiopian refugee camp of Teferi Ber in eastern Ethiopia have been repatriated to their homeland. They were among more than 10,000 refugees in the camp who had earlier volunteered to return to the self-declared republic of Somaliland. The total number of refugees who have returned home from various camps under the voluntary repatriation programme which commenced in 1997 has now reached just under 40,000 and, according to UNHCR, this figure is expected to reach 70,000 by the end of the year. The head of the eastern coordination office of the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs said that the returnees were each given a nine-month food ration and 210 Birr (approx. US \$90) for transportation. Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that twenty-seven Somali refugees arrived at Mayfa, Yemen, by boat from Bosasso. Another 105 refugees arrived by a smuggling boat at Bir Ali. Some of those onboard reported that five refugees lost their lives at sea due to bad weather while attempting the crossing to Yemen - a crossing that takes three days. (The Ethiopian Herald, September 9 & 29; IRIN Weekly Update, August 27- September 10; UNHCR)

Joint administration of Moqdishu: There have been escalating tensions in Somalia over the joint administration of Moqdishu by three warlords: Ali Mahdi, Hussien Aideed, and Mohamed Quanyare Afrah. The joint administration however is still unrecognized by rival warlords who feel threatened and excluded. Osman Hassan Ali "Atto", a rival warlord, has warned that civil war will likely breakout, especially in Moqdishu, since he and other warlords have not been included or consulted in the joint administration. He and other rival warlords believe that the three warlords are preparing to attack central and southern Somali regions in their attempt to expand their dictatorial clan administration over all of Somalia. Atto has also asked the Ethiopian and Italian governments to state their positions with regard to the new joint administration in reference to recent public statements by Aideed that they were supporting his group. Other discontented warlords like Ismail Moalin Musa and Hussein Haji have accused Egypt of taking sides in Somali affairs. Egypt's special envoy to Somalia, Mahud Mustafa was accused of being partisan because he visited the new police force premises in the Somali capital established by Hussein Mohamed and Ali Mahdi Mohamed. Rival warlords have also opposed the joint administration's plan to issue taxes on all imports and exports to provide payment for the 6,000 strong police force that it said were safeguarding premises housing imports and exports. They warned residents of Moqdishu not to pay the tax because it was a scheme to systematically extort money from the unsuspecting civilians. Somalia has been without a central government since the overthrow of Mohammed Siad Bare in 1991. Meanwhile, "tens of thousands" took to the streets in Moqdishu to demonstrate in support of their new governor, Hussein Ali Ahmed, who was welcomed on his arrival in the city by warlords Ali Mahdi, Mohamed Quanyare Afrah, and Issa Mohamed Siad. Ahmed was driven from the airport to his new headquarters escorted by 40 battle wagons which will be part of a fleet to serve the new joint Moqdishu police force. (AFP, September 2 - 22)

Nun kidnapped: An Italian nun who had been kidnapped by gunmen from the Ayr sub-clan in the Somali capital was freed after three days in captivity. The nun, Sister Fuerra Maria Angela, was head of the SOS-Kinderdorf Emergency Pediatric hospital in south Moqdishu. The mastermind of the kidnapping was a former employee of the hospital. The abductors had demanded a US \$200,000 ransom but were refused by the joint administration of Moqdishu. The nun was released after negotiations between representatives of the kidnappers and militia elders belonging to the gunmen's clan succeeded. The nun was reported to be in good health. Six of the gunmen were later convicted to one-year prison sentences by an Islamic Court in south Mogadishu. (AFP, September 10 - 20; IRIN Update, September 11; The Monitor, September 15)

Newspaper editor arrested: The Criminal Investigation Department arrested the editor of the daily newspaper *Jamhuria* in Hargeisa, the capital of the breakaway republic of Somaliland. Reporters at the paper said the arrest was the result of the paper reporting the arrest of members of the Ahtahad Al-

Islam Moslem group and accusing the Somaliland government of violating human rights in making the arrests. (AFP, September 8)

End of a cease-fire: New fighting has resumed in the Eeldheer district between Abgal and Murursade sub-clan gunmen after both sides violated a cease-fire agreement that lasted only nine days. So far, fifteen people have been killed and twenty-five wounded in the renewed battle. Warlords Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mohamed Qanyare Afrah who have been blamed for the fighting by Abgal warlord Hussein Bod, have denied any involvement and condemned the fighting. Meanwhile, Bod has accused Hussein Mohamed Aideed of organising militiamen from the armed Al-ithihad Al-Islam Moslem group and ethnic Ethiopian Oromos to combat rival in Moqdishu. "If Oromos and Al-ithihad intervene in Somali internal affairs in Moqdishu, the security situation will worsen," Bod told reporters. But Aideed, who has been visiting Addis Ababa, has pledged that his faction would not support the two groups in exchange for good neighbourliness with Ethiopia. (AFP, September 6 & 15 - 25)

Aideed's men accused of killing civilians: The *Bandir* newspaper reported that militiamen loyal to Hussien Mohammed Aideed killed six people, wounded 12 and burned down three villages in the Bakol region of south central Somalia. There has been continued fighting in the region between Aideed's men and the Rahawein Resistance Army (RRA) who are resisting Somali National Alliance (SNA) hegemony in the area. Aideed's spokesperson in Nairobi said that though there is fighting in the region the report that the militia killed innocent people was untrue. The fighting later spread to the towns of Baidoa and Burhakaba leaving a further 19 dead and 21 wounded. Meanwhile, armed gunmen have setup roadblocks along the Afgoi road and are asking for money from trucks transporting food items and stealing food. As a result, prices of commodities in Moqdishu have continued to rise. In the capital itself, Islamic courts have promised to order the dismantlement of dozens of roadblocks after commuters complained of banditry and extortion. "More than 40 checkpoints and roadblocks manned by freelance gunmen continue to extort money from us, making our journey a nightmare," passengers told journalists at the main Bakaraha bus station. (AFP, September 5, 18, 24 & 27)

Jubaland proposed: Somali faction leader General Mohammed Said Hersi "Morgan" plans to set up an administration called "Jubaland" centered on the port city of Kismayu. General Morgan said that several faction leaders are pushing ahead with their plans to set up their own mini-states around the country. The Puntland administration, in the northeast is leading the way with the Chairman, Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed, putting his team in place following agreement on the formation of the state at a congress held at Garowe. The various Somali warlords agreed at an Arab-sponsored meeting to work for a united government to rule the country. General Morgan believes that the mini-states would not challenge the unity of Somalia and that the various leaders would meet to form a new Somali Republic, through a federation or confederation. Meanwhile, the Marehan-clan Somali National Front (SNF) faction has accused Morgan of planning to attack its strongholds in the southern Juba valley. The two sides fought fierce battles in the southern port town of Kismayo in April when the SNF tried to wrest control of the town from Morgan. The SNF were later accused by Morgan of attempting an attack on the port using armed motor boats. (*The Monitor*, September 5-6; AFP, September 25 & 30; ION, September 30)

Polio campaign a success: The second round of the Polio immunization campaign in Southern and Central Somalia has been successfully completed. The second round, supported by local health workers, NGOs and supported by WHO and UNICEF, was conducted between 13 and 17 September. An estimated 950,000 children below the age of five years have now received two consecutive vaccines against Polio, and Vitamin A against blindness. A field assessment for a continuation of the campaign in Northern Somalia has taken place and two weeks of preparations for the commencement of vaccinations in the Northeast and Northwest was due to commence at the end of September. Meanwhile, at least 15 people have died of Cholera and many others have contracted the disease in the southern region of Benadir, which includes the city of Moqdishu. Health workers say that following the withdrawal of most aid agencies, there is now a severe shortage of drugs to combat the outbreak. (UNCT Somalia Monitor, September 11 - 21; AFP, October 9)

ICRC restricts activities in Somalia: The International Committee of the Red Cross has disclosed that it will no longer send workers to Somalia and that it has drastically reduced its activities in Somalia to only providing "first aid and surgical assistance to war wounded and basic curative services". The ICRC stated

that the decision was based on security risks and the kidnapping of ten ICRC workers in north Moqdishu on April 15. ICRC was not the only agency to retreat due to security concerns in the past. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Care International have also left. "The withdrawal affected the internally displaced Somali people and Ethiopian refugees who came here in 1977 following the Ogaden war," said Abdi Qaidr Issaq Mohamed, chairman of Rashid camp in north Moqdishu. (AFP, September 20 & 25)

KENYA

NGOs shutdown: Five non-governmental organisations (NGOs) considered security risks by the Kenyan Government have been shutdown. The NGO coordinating chief warned that other NGOs were under investigation and would be shut down if compelling evidence to do so surfaced. The five relief organizations were: Help Africa's People, the Al Haramain Foundation, the International Islamic Relief Organization, the Ibrahim Bin Abdul Aziz al Ibrahim Foundation, and Mercy Relief International. Another sixteen Muslim NGOs have also been asked to stop all activities. (*The Monitor*, September 10; *IRIN Weekly Round Up*, September 18)

Campaign to raise money for bomb victims Kenyan radio reported that the Kenyan government has launched a campaign to raise 9 billion shillings (US \$156 million) to support the victims of the August 7th US Embassy bombing. The Minister of State Gideon Ndambuki said that the appeal document was aimed ensuring the coordination of various contributions and to ensure accountability for resources mobilised by the appeal. In a related development, U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley has pledged "substantial" American aid to rebuild Kenyan lives and businesses shattered by the bomb blast. Daley, who was making a short stop in the Kenyan capital while on a three-nation African visit, toured the downtown site of the bombing and laid a wreath a small memorial to the victims. (*IRIN Update*, September 1; *The Monitor*, September 19-20)

MPs prepare for elections Eight Members of Parliament will quit their current political parties for a common one in time for the next General Election. The MPs include members of KANU, the ruling party, Ford-People and Ford-Kenya. At a rally in Lugari district, the group said their leaders had failed them and predicting a "great war" when the elections come around in four years, called on people to support the new party when it is formed. Meanwhile, President Moi's eldest son, Jonathon Toroitich, has said he will enter politics when his father retires. In making the statement, he called upon opposition leaders to support the Head of State to facilitate democracy. "All Kenyan leaders, regardless of their political affiliations, should come together and support Mzee (President Moi) so that he can leave a better legacy when his term ends in the year 2002," Toroitich said, calling for a continuity of democracy in the country. (*The Nation*, September 14)

Kenya still a place of interest for foreign commerce: Despite the recent bombing in Kenya, the US administration has a plan to increase trade investments on the African continent, which includes doubling the number of commercial representatives and tripling the number of African countries targeted with US Commerce Department missions. The US secretary of commerce, William Daley, had planned to come to Kenya heading a trade tour that consisted of 20 heads of enterprises hand picked out of 100 candidates. Although the trip was postponed to December due to the bombing, the secretary visited Nairobi to voice the US trade strategy and to do a quick assessment of assistance the US might provide for the bomb victims. Meanwhile, despite security concerns, Kenya hosted the 23rd annual conference of the International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) from September 16 to 18. More than 600 delegates attended from the 134-member body that groups capital market's regulatory organisations from around the world. (*ION*, September 30; *The Monitor*, September 5-6)

Government fails to avoid teachers' strike The Kenyan government has failed to avoid a repeat performance of last October's strike by the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), which was successful at getting them a 200 percent salary increase. The increase was scheduled to take place over a five-year period and the first of two phases has already been implemented. Earlier, the KNUT announced plans for another strike this election season to force the government to implement the second phase. President Daniel arap Moi pursues his strategy of divide and conquer by appealing to the

secondary school KNUT members to set up their own trade union in an attempt to play on the feeling that many once had, before the successful strike last year, that the KNUT watches out more for the interests of the secondary school teachers. In the event, the strike went ahead as planned with police in the capital, Nairobi, breaking up a demonstration by several hundred strikers. Riot police took up positions outside the teachers' union headquarters in Nairobi after KNUT began its nationwide action, calling out its 200,000 members for the third time in a year. The strike comes as schoolchildren prepare for examinations later next month. The starting salary for a new teacher is about US \$40 per month. University students have threatened to join the strike if it is not resolved soon. (*ION, September 5; BBC News, October 5*)

UGANDA

Coffee exports decline: The Ugandan Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) has reported another drop in Uganda's coffee exports. Exports dropped by 15.5 percent in August, compounding a 13.7 percent fall in July over the previous month. With only one month left to the end of the coffee year, the country has already exported 2,805,770 bags worth US \$258.4 million, compared to over 4 million bags worth US \$336.5 million in the same period last year. As a result of a good crop in Brazil, the world price of coffee has also dropped from \$1.38 per kilo to \$1.35 this year. (*AFP, September 8*)

Parliament compromises on privatization: The Ugandan government appealed to parliament to reverse its earlier ban on Uganda's privatisation programme, saying that a number of donors had threatened to withdraw support for the reform programme. Parliament had imposed the ban citing lack of transparency in the process but the decision quickly attracted heavy criticism from a number of quarters. Under pressure, parliament later agreed to a partial lifting of the ban. This compromise followed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) threat to stop its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, which amounts to US \$130 million. The compromise reached allows the continuation of the privatization process of only the state firms whose sales to private owners are in the advanced stages. (*AFP, September 2 & 9*)

Donors tell government to fight corruption: The state owned paper *New Vision* reported that in a confidential document that donors sent to the Vice-President, Wandira Kazibwe, they said that their funds could dry up if action was not taken against corrupt officials in government. The donors included the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UN agencies, the European Union countries, and a number of banks, non-governmental organizations and Asian countries. In 1997 and 1998, 55 percent of government expenditure was made up of donor funding. Earlier this year, parliament censured the state minister of primary education and a former internal security chief, following allegations that he had been involved in a number of corrupt activities. Meanwhile, Uganda's State Electricity Board (UEB) lost US \$27 million in 17 months through high-level fraud reported the Independent *Monitor* newspaper. Auditors found that UEB senior managers had stolen the money. A UEB official has said that steps would be taken to recover the money. (*AFP, September 10 & 20*)

Government and rebel forces fight: There have been reports of separate incidents of fighting between the Ugandan army, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The Ugandan army reported that it had killed 36 rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces. The independent *Monitor* newspaper reported that four people had died in an exchange of fire between government forces and the Lord's Resistance Army rebels. In a separate incident, the LRA ambushed a lorry as it traveled through northern Uganda's Murchisson Falls National Park and set it ablaze. The driver and conductor were unhurt in the incident. Observers say the rebels have been targeting camps they believe are stocked with relief food and other essentials for the thousands of people displaced by the civil war in the two northern districts of Gulu and Kitgum. The LRA has been fighting to overthrow the government of President Museveni since 1988 to replace it with a government based on the biblical 10 commandments. Meanwhile, the ADF continues its hit-and-run raids in the west of the country, attacking both villages and army outposts. In one such attack, some 45 ADF rebels made their way from bases in the Ruwenzori mountains and burnt Kilembe market to the ground. During the raid, the ADF claim to have killed 20 Ugandan troops and abducted 11 others. In an interview with the BBC, an ADF spokesman

said that the rebels had launched this attack to prove that they were based inside Uganda and not in the DRC as claimed by President Museveni. (*IRIN Update, September 7; AFP September 3, 7, 11 & 18*)

Commodity exchange to be established: Uganda is to introduce a commodity exchange programme by the end of year, by which buyers and sellers will be able to get both local and international market information on agricultural products. Officials planning the new mode of trading for Uganda's nine agricultural products (maize, beans, sesame, cocoa, sunflower, wheat, rice, sorghum and coffee) said that they wanted a system that would see actual traded commodities driven by market forces. The system will help put into place services like price discovery, quality and grading, prompt payment and arbitration. Officials hope the exchange will attract international buyers, with the major players in the exchange being categorised as commercial farms, small-growers' associations, traders and relief agencies. (*AFP, September 12*)

Kampala's Mayor arrested for bank fraud: The mayor of Kampala, Nasser Ntege Sebaggala, has been arrested in the United States for bank fraud and for failing to declare US \$108,000 he brought into the country. The mayor has been refused permission to return to Uganda as he waits for his trial, which is scheduled to take place in October. The Mayor was charged with filling in a "0" on a U.S. customs form requiring declaration of more than \$10,000 in cash or securities being carried into the U.S. He was also charged with carrying four stolen or altered checks into the U.S. Meanwhile, over 50,000 people in Kampala have signed a petition urging Washington to grant bail to their mayor. The mayor's publicity secretary said that the petitions will be given to the U.S. embassy in Kampala. (*AFP, September 17 & 11*)

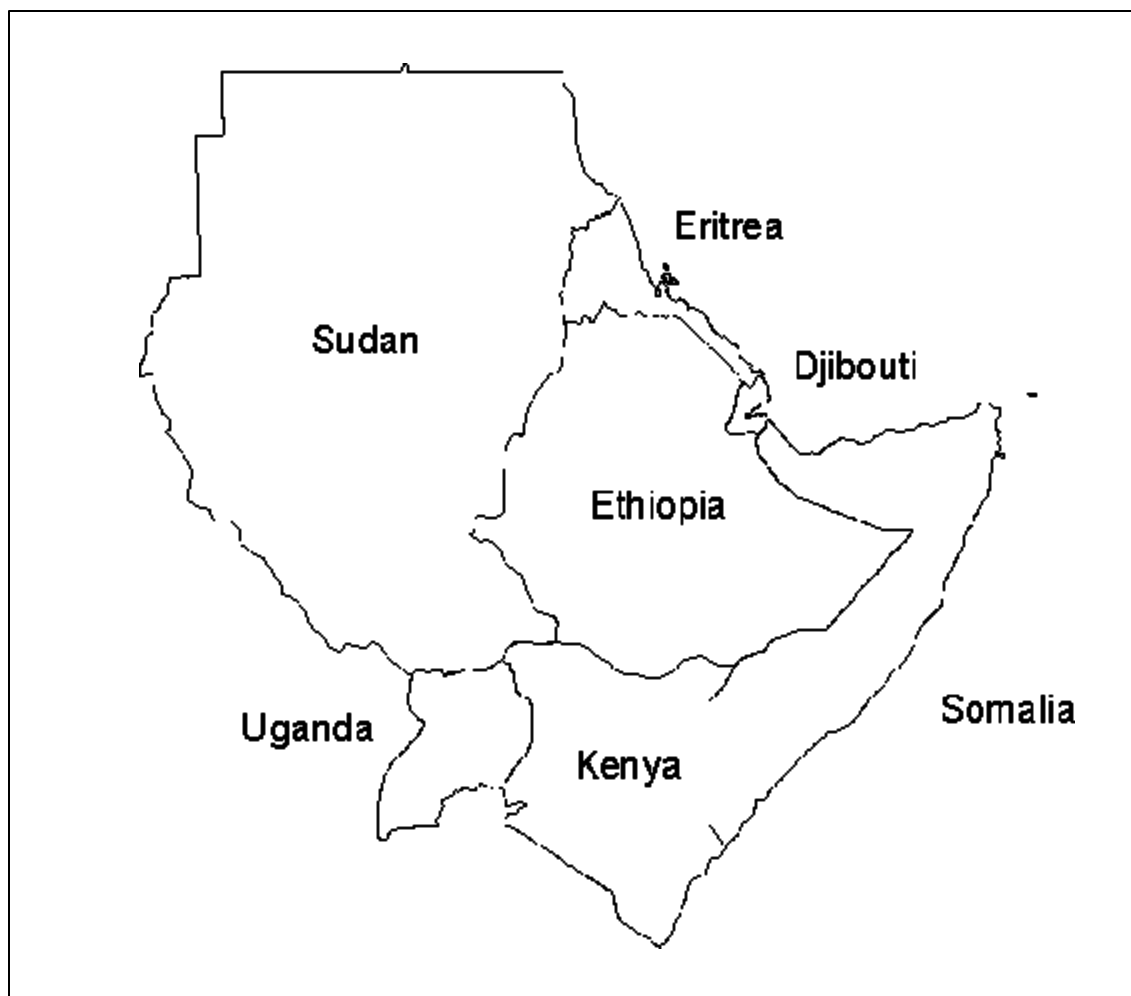
Ugandan Airlines facing hard times Shell Oil Company, which had been supplying the state owned Ugandan Airlines with petroleum products, decided to confiscate the 18 year-old Fokker friendship plane and other unspecified properties when the airline failed to pay its outstanding bills. The airplane is valued at about US \$500,000 and was the sole remaining aircraft belonging to the airline. In related news, Air Zimbabwe has refused to extend the lease of an aircraft to Uganda Airlines because Harare fears that it was being used to ferry arms to rebels fighting in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Meanwhile, extra security measures were taken after a bomb threat was made against the Ugandan International Airport at Entebbe by anonymous phone calls to the police. Uganda police have also been defending a decision to close Parliament Avenue, where the US Embassy and the British High Commission are situated, citing security concerns. Both the U.S. embassy and British High Commission had earlier been subject to bomb threats that had forced their closure for a number of days. The move, however, has angered some business tenants who say they are losing money at a rate of one million US dollars each month. The tenants have given an ultimatum to the government saying that if they are not compensated within 60 days, they will take legal action to seek redress. Spokesman for the Ugandan police, Eric Naigambi, said that the road was not opening anytime soon. (*AFP, September 6, 8 & 22*)

Ugandan troops in eastern DRC: Ugandan troops have taken control of airports in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to stop Kampala's main foe, the Sudanese government, President Museveni has told members of the Ugandan parliament. The state owned New Vision paper reported that Museveni told the meeting of more than two hundred MPs that the Ugandan forces would not leave until he had confirmation from DRC's President Laurent Kabila that the facilities there would not be used by either Ugandan rebels or the Sudanese military. "There is no authority in eastern Congo" he is reported as saying to the meeting. The statements came just days after Uganda was one of six countries to agree to a ceasefire in the vast former Zaire at a summit meeting. Museveni also maintains that he sent his troops into DRC as part of a wider operation to flush out rebels of the opposition Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) from both sides of the Ruwenzori mountains where they have been hiding. In another related development, President Museveni addressed parliament directly on national security issues, the first time that he has taken advantage of Article 101 in Uganda's constitution which allows the president, in consultation with the speaker, to address parliament "from time to time on issues of national importance". In the 90 minute address, Museveni dismissed charges that his government wants to build a Tutsi empire straddling the Great Lakes as "colonial trash". However, he went on to praise the impulse of the regions ancestors to centralise authority and unite peoples, but added the proviso: "Now we should unite people by discussion – not by conquest. But the idea of integration is one that I support". (*AFP, September 9, 16 & 24*)

Bomb plot thwarted: The Uganda police force working with United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents have arrested eighteen people who had planned to set off bombs at the exact time as the bombs that took Kenya and Tanzania by surprise on August 7. The conspirators, comprising mainly Ugandan and Kenyan Somalis of the same wealthy clan, reportedly had connections to the Saudi exile and international terrorist, Osman bin Laden, and the group that set off the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bombs. The conspirators had targeted Kampala's main post office, the Bank of Uganda, the large Owino market, the U.S. embassy in Kampala, and the residence of U.S. Ambassador Nancy Powell. They are expected to be brought to trial soon. (AFP, September 18 -25)

Foreign investment drops The Uganda Investment Authority reported a major drop in the number of foreign investment projects and a decline in the number of those successfully implemented. Part of the decline could be attributed to the end of a programme that restituted the properties of (mainly Asian) Ugandans that were expelled during President Idi Amin's reign. Another reason could be the lack of completion of projects that have been in the pipeline for some time. The promoters of these projects are reluctant to go ahead because of security concerns arising from the situation in neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, the Ugandan shilling has continued to depreciate. In June last year, the shilling was worth 1,062 to the US dollar, but started a free fall blamed on reduced foreign currency earnings from the export of coffee. The free fall has worsened in recent months, dropping to a record low since it was liberalised in 1992. However, outgoing IMF representative Ulrike Wilson told AFP that the weakness of the shilling was not unprecedented, reasoning that globally, the dollar had strengthened against other currencies. (ION, September 30; AFP, September 13)

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.

29 October, 1998

UNDP-EUE
PO Box 5580,
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Tel.: (251) (1) 51-10-28/29
Fax: (251) (1) 51-12-92
e-mail: undp-eue@telecom.net.et

