

HIGHLIGHTS

Djibouti

Port of Tadjourah was modernized as part of efforts to decentralize the economic structure.

Eritrea

Eritrean National Assembly decided to hold first general election in December 2001.

Ethiopia

Ethiopian parliament re-elected Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, Speaker of the House Dawit Yohanes and Deputy Speaker, Dr. Petros Olango.

Sudan

Anti-government demonstrations were held against the government's military recruitment campaign, the imposition of school fees, shortage of teachers, the delay in the reopening of schools and shortages in electricity and water.

Kenya

Kenya will replace over 800 of its peacekeepers in Sierra Leone in December.

Somalia

Interim Somalia President nominated Ali Khalif Galaid for Prime Minister.



September/ October 2000

REGIONAL ISSUES

UN mission for Internally Displaced Persons: A joint mission of UN humanitarian agencies, including representatives from FAO, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA and NGOs, visited Ethiopia and Eritrea on a quest to coordinate programs to help people displaced by war. The mission gave priority to Ethiopia and Eritrea over five other war torn countries, including, Burundi, Angola, Indonesia, Somalia and Sierra Leone as hostility in these two countries has effectively stopped and a large number of internally displaced people are going home or have said they intend to. The team, led by UN Special Coordinator of the Senior Inter-Agency network on Internal Displacement, Dennis McNamara, talked to high-level government officials from both countries on their visit. (*AFP October 16, Walta Information Centre web site October 18, Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea, October 19,20*)

UN Special Envoy makes return visit: UN Special Envoy on the drought in the Horn of Africa, Ms. Catherine Bertini, made a weeklong follow-up tour to drought-affected areas of Kenya and Ethiopia in mid-September. During her visit to Ethiopia, Ms. Bertini told a press conference that early action by the UN had helped to avert a possible famine, adding that the situation had improved since April when she had witnessed many children and elderly people suffering from starvation in the Ethiopian Somali Regional State. However, Bertini said that aid is still needed, as millions of people remain in need of food, water, seeds, sanitation and agricultural equipment. She highlighted the still critical situation in Kenya where there is a need for urgent donor attention to assist 3.3 million people. According to a UN report, Kenya will require US \$46 million to meet urgent relief needs until early December 2000. Regarding Ethiopia, Ms. Bertini noted the UN had requested over US \$190 million to meet food and other relief requirements until January 2001. (*AFP, September 19, IRIN, September 19*)

Rift Valley Fever: Six Gulf states including, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Yemen and United Arab Emirates, alleged that Rift Valley Fever (RVF) transmitted from animals imported from the Horn of Africa has claimed 70 to 200 lives and devastated herds of livestock. Consequently, these countries have banned livestock imports from Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. The ban is being heavily resisted by Somalia and Sudan. Somalia, from where five ships of livestock have already been turned back by the United Arab Emirates and which is expected to be greatly impacted by the ban, claimed that tests performed locally show an absence of the disease. The Somali government, in efforts to lift the ban invited medical experts from Saudi Arabia and other countries to do their own tests. Sudan and Ethiopia have also claimed that their livestock are not infected with RVF. Ethiopia asserted that RVF generally arises in lowland areas when untimely heavy rain occurs. Alluding to the recent drought in the region, this abnormality, Ethiopia claimed did not happen. (*Radio Hargeisa, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 24; 'Xog-Ogaal', quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 27; AFP, October 2; Walta Information Centre web site, October 18*)

European Union Commissioner visits: The European Union Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Poul Nielson, as part of a

working visit to East Africa, visited Ethiopia and Eritrea from October 4 to 9. During his visit to Ethiopia, Mr. Nielson held discussions with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other government officials to strengthen existing development cooperation between Ethiopia and the EU. During the visit, he stated that the EU, apart from providing food assistance to Ethiopia, has plans to assist the country's food security and food self-sufficiency. He also confirmed that the EU has plans to provide Ethiopia with financial and technical assistance, particularly in the fields of education, health, infrastructure development and capacity building. Following his visit to Ethiopia, Mr. Nielson visited Eritrea for three days. During his stay in Eritrea, he emphasized that the main objective of his visit was to obtain first hand information on the results of contributions made by the EU to alleviate the crisis caused by war and drought. While in Eritrea, Neilson had discussions with senior Eritrean officials to seek ways in which the EU could support the recovery of the country's economy and infrastructure. (*Walta Information Center, October 6, Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea, October 8*)

UNMEE reached another milestone leading to the eventual deployment of a full peacekeeping force.

United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea: The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has reached another milestone leading to the eventual deployment of a full peacekeeping force. The mission's military observers deployment up to mid October will reach 100 on both sides. The mission assigned the military observers to five locations in Eritrea (Barentu, Adi Kwala, Adi Keyih, Shembiko and Assab) and to six locations in Ethiopia (Inda Silase, Aigrat, Zela Anbesa, Rama, Sheraro and Manda). The military observers were trained on the background of the Ethiopian and Eritrean conflict, with presentations on the history, culture, economy, politics and military situation in the region. Concurrently, Ethiopia trained 74 Ethiopian officers to assist the military observers. The proposed final phase of the operation will include the deployment of two battalions of 800 peacekeeping officers in the west and central zone of the border, 600 in the north-eastern border and 2,000 in de-mining operations and other support functions. The responsibility of the mission, as stated by the Security Council, is to ensure that the parties adhere to their security commitment, monitoring the re-deployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after February 6 1999, while Eritrea redeploys to 25 km from the position of the redeployed Ethiopian troops. The mission will then establish and monitor a Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) and provide technical assistance to humanitarian mine action activities there and in adjacent areas where it will also coordinate with the humanitarian and human right works of others. Meanwhile, Mary Robinson, United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, has confirmed that there will be a small component within UNMEE to monitor human rights issues. This was in accordance with the Secretary General's proposal to Ethiopia and Eritrea requesting Mrs. Robinson to recommend how the UN could assist in addressing human right issues within the UN peacekeeping mission sent to both countries. (*AFP, September 15; CNN, September 21; Walta Information Centre web site, September 26, UNMEE press release, October 23*)

Security Council recognized the need for demining to pave the way for the safe deployment of peacekeeping forces and to enable the safe return of civilians.

Demining action launched: In addition to authorizing a force of 4,200 peacekeepers under the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the Security Council recognized the need for demining to pave the way for the safe deployment of the force and to enable the safe return of civilians who fled their homes during the fighting. Within UNMEE a United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) has been set up to provide and coordinate mine action in support of the peacekeeping forces and to liaise with other mine action campaigns. To determine the nature and scope of the mine/UXO threat, the UN has now requested an international NGO, the HALO Trust, to undertake a rapid survey of the proposed Temporary Security Zone and adjacent and work in the field commenced in both Eritrea and Ethiopia during September. Survey teams have so far found munitions from the latest war as well as some minefields from earlier wars, for example west of Barentu, in Eritrea. In Ethiopia, the HALO survey teams

are working closely with personnel from the Ethiopian Demining Project whose staff are being familiarized with humanitarian survey methods. (*Walta Information Centre, September 21; ICC, September 24; IRIN September 26 & October 9*)

DJIBOUTI

Tadjourah port modernized: On October 10, President Ismail Omar Guelleh inaugurated the newly modernized port of Tadjourah, which was carried out to improve shipments to the northern Afar district of Tadjourah. The port was modernized at a cost of US \$1.64 million in 12 months from a small port to a port that has the capacity to handle vessels and their cargoes. President Ismail Omar Guelleh was reported as saying that the renovation took place as a part of the government's program to decentralize its administrative and economic structure and help develop the districts of Tadjourah, Obock, Ali-Sabieh and Dikhil. (*IRIN, 16 October*)

Airliner makes emergency landing: An Israeli Boeing 757 passenger jet flying from Tel Aviv to Mombassa, Kenya, with 260 passengers and crew, was allowed by Djibouti airport authorities to make an emergency landing on "humanitarian grounds" after technical problems, on October 10. The aircraft was grounded for 17 hours while safety checks were carried out. Meanwhile, the passengers refused to go to hotels in the small Arabic-speaking nation's capital for "security reasons". The passengers remained in the transit lounge until the plane took off the following day. Djibouti, a member of the Arab League, has no diplomatic, economic or trade links with Israel. The incident occurred amid protests in Islamic countries about Israeli action regarding the Palestinian territories, where two weeks of violence has claimed an estimated 100 lives. (*AFP October 12*)

Prime Minister back home: After almost six months away, Djibouti Prime Minister Barkat Gourad Hamadou returned home on October 2 after receiving medical treatment for heart failure and partial paralysis. He was greeted by a colorful ceremony but his return has re-ignited public speculation over a cabinet reshuffle. (*IRIN, October 3*)

ERITREA

Elections scheduled: The Eritrean National Assembly, in accordance with the Eritrean constitution, decided, on October 2 at its 13th regular session, to hold Eritrea's first general election in December 2001. The assembly acknowledged that it could not delay general elections indefinitely as a result of the continuing tension with Ethiopia over the disputed border. An election was supposed to have been held in 1998, however, due to the border conflict with Ethiopia it was postponed. The delay has led some people to demand reforms stressing that the timescale for the elections is still too long. (*Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, October 2*)

Eritrea-Sudan relations: A four-day visit of Eritrean high-level delegates led by President Isayas Afewerki to Sudan ended on October 7 after both countries vowed to resolve the problems between them by peaceful means and ending an era of animosity. During the meeting, the two sides held discussions on cooperation in the bilateral, regional and international domains. The two sides considered the prospects for removing obstacles hindering the course of bilateral relations, the means for developing those ties and the process of reconciliation and peace in Sudan. (*AFP, October 7*)

Eritrea-Djibouti relations: On 15 September, a newly appointed Eritrean Ambassador to Djibouti, Mahumud Ali Jabrah, arrived in Djibouti following an agreement between the two neighbouring countries to normalize and

Djibouti

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Eritrea

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strengthen their ties. In a meeting held between the Eritrean Ambassador and the Djiboutian Foreign Minister in Djibouti on September 23, it was noted that Djibouti was also preparing to reopen its embassy in Eritrea. (*Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 24*)

ETHIOPIA

Six Oromo opposition parties Unite: At an Oromo opposition congress held between 16th and 20th September, six Oromo political organizations, namely the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Oromo People's Liberation Front (OPLF), the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromiya (IFLO), the Oromo Liberation Council (OLC), the United Oromo People's Liberation Front (UOPLF) and the Oromo People's Liberation Organization (OPLO), who were adversaries at one point, agreed to coordinate their struggle and merge their forces as a united front. The united front, was named the United Oromo Liberation Force (UOLF). The United Front also expressed their willingness to cooperate with other opposition forces. (*'Ethiopian radio', quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 28; IRIN, October 1*)

Sudan requests ambassadorial upgrade: Following the 1995 terrorist assassination attempt on Egyptian President, Husni Mubarak, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia downgraded its diplomatic presence to Chargé d'Affairs in Sudan. According to unofficial reports, on the sidelines of the 55th General Assembly of the United Nations, the Sudanese External Relations Minister requested Ethiopia to restore its diplomatic presence to an ambassadorial level. (*Walta Information Center web site, September 20*)

Prime Minister meets Afar liberation leader: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi met and held discussions with Sultan Ali Mireh Hanfareh, opposition leader of the Afar Liberation Front. According to an official statement released by the Prime Minister's office, Prime Minister Meles and Sultan Ali Mireh discussed political, economic and social issues in the Afar Regional State. (*Radio Ethiopia, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 25*)

Top officials re-elected: The Ethiopian parliament, in which the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) party holds 533 seats from a 548 member body, re-elected Speaker of the House Dawit Yohanes and Deputy Speaker, Dr. Petros Olango, on October 9 and Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on October 10. The re-elected Prime Minister requested the approval for the continuation of the cabinet until structured changes based on study are met. After having discussed the matter, the house accepted the Prime Minister's request with a majority vote. (*AFP October 9*)

Somali State elections: In the election for local state parliament, the ruling Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) party won 150 seats out of 165, while the remaining 15 seats were divided between two opposition parties. In the elections for the federal parliament, the Council of People's Representatives (CPR), out of the 23 seats allocated to the Somali State, 19 were won by the ruling party, and four by the opposition. (*IRIN, October 2*)

SUDAN

Series of violent protests: Repeated anti-government demonstrations were held in Sudan for about a month starting from September 11. Riot police used baton charges and tear gas to disperse demonstrators protesting against the government's military recruitment campaign, the imposition of school fees, shortage of teachers, the delay in the reopening of schools as well as

shortages in electricity and water. In the early demonstrations vehicles and government offices were attacked by the rioters, a female student was killed and more than 10 persons injured as the authorities tried to disperse the crowd. The equally violent subsequent demonstrations were also spearheaded by students and left several police officers wounded. Government officials, including Vice-President Taha, publicly accused Hassan al-Turabi's Peoples National Congress (PNC) of inciting the anti-government demonstrations in order to delay the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for next December. Under this allegation the government arrested 51 members of PNC. Turabi, who was expelled from the ruling National Congress party and removed from his post of parliamentary speaker in May 2000 by President Omar al-Bashir, formed the PNC in June 2000. (AFP, September 15 – 19; Omdurman radio, September 18 & Sudan TV, October 9, both quoted by BBC Monitoring Service)

Following a request from UNICEF for a period of tranquility to enable the smooth implementation of an immunization campaign against polio, SPLM/A and Sudanese government both declared a twelve day ceasefire

Sudan fails to win UN seat: Following a fourth round of voting in the UN General Assembly for the African seat in the Security Council, on October 10, Mauritius won against the main contender, Sudan. Sudan's Ambassador to the UN claimed that the vote was a battle between Sudan and America and not against Mauritius. The USA opposed and campaigned against the election of Sudan claiming that it does not address international human rights and terrorism concerns. Sudan, on the contrary, claimed that it had signed all international conventions on terrorism. The OAU summit held last July had endorsed Sudan's nomination for the seat in the Security Council. Arab ministers also supported the nomination. (AFP, September 19 & October 10; Suna, October 11)

Peace talks in Eritrea: On September 26, General Omer al-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan, held the first direct talks with Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani, National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) leader at a reconciliation meeting in Asmara arranged under the auspices of the Eritrean government. The NDA, an umbrella organization of armed opposition groups from both north and south Sudan, and the President of Sudan has earlier agreed that the only way for peace was negotiation and hence they agreed to hold direct talks. However, the NDA maintained that they would not compromise on their principle of the need for unified peace talks and a demand for a political reform. The two sides, in a joint statement, affirmed their determination to seriously work to end the civil war as quickly as possible to pave the way for voluntary unity of the country and reconstruction of what had been destroyed by the war. (SUNA, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 27)

Peace talks with SPLM: Sudanese presidential adviser for peace affairs, al-Tahir and the Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) told the press that talks with Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Kenya had made slight progress, despite an SPLM claim that it did not. The peace talks that took place from September 21 to October 5 in Nairobi were a new round of the many meetings organized under the auspices of IGAD in recent years. It focused on, within the context of a unified Sudan, issues of separation of religion from the state and the demand for the division of wealth and power and how the issues of the regions outside southern Sudan could be handled. Al-Tahir noted that the talks made progress in matters related to the division of power and wealth via the federalism system of government in which power was divided between the federal government and the states. The difference he said surfaced when the rebel movement submitted its stand, which calls for secularism, which was rejected by the government party. (Republic of Sudan Radio, October 8; Sudan TV October 11, both quoted by BBC Monitoring Service)

Cease-fire for the fight against polio: Following request from UNICEF for a period of tranquility in Sudan to enable the smooth implementation of an immunization campaign against polio, the Sudan People's Liberation

Kenya's Internal Security Minister said violent crime is hindering the country's development.

Kenya noted that it might resort to forcible seizure of illegally acquired arms from the Ajurans, Gare, Abduwak and Aulyhan ethnic militia factions harbored by feuding Somali clans in North Eastern Province by November.

Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and Sudanese government both declared a twelve day ceasefire starting October 16. Both parties said they would not engage in any offensive operation unless the other party instigates it. UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy on a two day visit to Sudan urged both parties to continue their commitment to the ceasefire agreement for a successful completion of the campaign. (AFP October 17, SUNA, October 21)

KENYA

Kenya to replace peacekeepers in Sierra Leone: Kenya is to replace over 800 of its peacekeepers in Sierra Leone in December. Defense Ministry Spokesman, Bogita Onger, said the changeover was a "routine rotation", adding that soldiers on peace missions are normally recalled after one year. The Kenyan battalions are serving under the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and are deployed in the Makeni and Magburaka areas of the country. (Daily Nation, September 29)

Government admits security breakdown: Kenya's Internal Security Minister, Major Marsden Madoka, said that violent crime, cattle rustling, banditry, political crimes and ethnic tension are hindering the country's development. Madoka noted that cases of armed robberies and senseless murders have been on the increase in the recent past and the presence of insecurity in neighboring states has further promoted the proliferation of arms. Added to this he also confirmed that there is the danger of international terrorism. Therefore, he acknowledged the need for a systematic approach by law enforcement officers. (East Africa Standard web site, September 15; IRIN News Briefs, September 29)

Arms control: Kenya noted that it might resort to forcible seizure of illegally acquired arms from the Ajurans, Gare, Abduwak and Aulyhan ethnic militia factions harbored by feuding Somali clans in North Eastern Province by November. Provincial Commissioner Mr. Maurice Makhanu said this would not be the case if the security committees in the area surrender illegally acquired firearms. (East African Standard web site, October 11)

British grant for drought: The British government made a 1.15 billion shillings grant to Kenya to address the ongoing drought and famine problems. 920 million out of the 1.15 billion shillings will be channeled through the World Food Program's emergency feeding operation, while more than 200 million shillings will be spent through NGOs and other community-based organizations. (KBC radio, quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, October 10)

SOMALIA

Appointment of a Prime Minister: After holding a meeting in Djibouti with the members of the clan-based Transitional National Assembly, interim President Abdulqassim Salat Hassan officially nominated Ali Khalif Galaid, a university professor and prominent businessman, for the post of Prime Minister in the new government. A few days later, on October 20, the Prime Minister announced his nomination of 24 ministers from different clans and sub-clans to form the first government since 1991. The new government has established itself in Moqdishu, where building and hotels have been renovated for the purpose. Some Members of Parliament, however, claim that the newly elected president is violating the transitional charter by choosing Moqdishu over Baidoa. (AFP October 8, 14 & 20; IRIN, October 9)

Political situation in Puntland: The president of the self-declared Puntland

The president of Puntland regional government opposed the Arta conference, which elected interim Somali President.

Interim President Abdulqassim Salat Hassan intends to create a force of 5,000 salaried policemen.

Chairman of the Somalia National Congress, and interim President of Somalia, met in Libya under the auspices of the Libyan leader.

regional government, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, voiced his opposition to the Arta conference (which elected interim Somali President Abdulqassim Salat Hassan) and described it as detrimental to the interests of the Puntland people. He organized a meeting in the capital of Puntland, Gaalkacyo and attended another in Nairobi, Kenya. The anti-government meeting held in Nairobi included, among others, Osman Hassan Ali Ato and Muhammed Qanyare Afrah and was supported by Muhammed Ibrahim Egal, president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland. During his stay in Nairobi, the Puntland president held talks with senior Kenya and Ethiopian officials. The president of Puntland also reshuffled his cabinet in a bid to improve relations with the neighboring Somali regions. (AFP and IRIN, October 5)

Establishment of police force: About 2,000 former militiamen have been recruited and are being trained in camps in Moqdishu. Interim President Abdulqassim Salat Hassan intends to create a force of 5,000 salaried policemen. This project is supported by the Moqdishu business community, which has provided up to US \$3 million to the project. In the process, 150 militiamen were dismissed by their employer, the Banaadir Company, and subsequently staged a protest in Moqdishu. (Qaran web site, September 24; AFP, September 25)

More clan fighting in Moqdishu: Clan violence, which left at least 16 people dead including six civilians, took place between Ali Mahdi Muhammed, an Abgal clansman who control north Mogadishu, the only faction leader who has openly expressed support for the newly elected interim president and Hussein Muhammed Aideed of the Haber Gidir clan, who is among the rest of the faction leaders who rejected the new government. Aideed who was latter joined by another fighter led by Habr Gedir warlord Osman Hassan took place in the Bermuda district of Mogadishu. The fighting according to Bermuda community leader started because he Habr Gedir carried out an unjustifiable attack on residents as they slept. The community leader, nevertheless, denied the claim that the fighting started in retaliation for the recent killing of their kin by Abgal gunmen. He remarked, however, that some Habr Gedir people were in fact killed by freelance gunmen. Musa Sudi Yalahow a warlord who controls part of Mogadishu and who rejected Somalia's new president Abdulkassim Salat Hassan, described the fighting as a plot to drive the Abgal out of Bermuda and claimed that the Habr Gedir militiamen were helped by Abdulkassim Salat Hassan. Later on October 3 a revenge attack by Abgal sub-clan of Waceysle erupted leaving six people dead. The fighting took place in the Karan area of North Mogadishu, and community elders of the Wacaysle and other Abgal sub-clans have initiated negotiations in an effort to contain the violence. (AFP September 23 & 22; IRIN October 3)

Aideed and President Abdulqassim meet: Hussein Aideed, chairman of the Somalia National Congress, and the new interim President of Somalia, Abdulqassim Salat Hassan, met in Libya under the auspices of the Libyan leader Moamar Kadhafi. After intensive discussions, it was reported that the two parties had pledged to work for the reestablishment of the state and restoration of security, stability and development in Somalia. However, Aideed later denied recognizing Abdulqassim as the new president and reaching an agreement with him. Aideed made it clear that he considers Abdulqassim only as a group leader and that recognizing him as a legitimate leader in Somalia would only encourage renewed bloodshed. On October 22 Aideed once more said he will not deal with the new President, claiming that Abdulqassim had violated a UN arms embargo by importing weapons to fight a rival. (AFP, September 23 and October 22; 'Ayaamaha', quoted by BBC Monitoring Service, September 24)

Aid workers released: Two relief workers, who were abducted two months ago in Moqdishu (July 26) by Somali gunmen, were released on September 18. The aid workers, Jonathan Ward, a British man, and Francosie Deusch, a

French woman, were employed by the Action Contre la Faim aid agency. Somali officials, particularly the new interim president Abdulqassim Salat Hassan facilitated their release. (AFP, September 22)

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SOURCES:

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