

Horn of Africa: The Monthly Review 1 September – 31 October 1997

The following is the fifteenth in a series of updates prepared by the UNDP Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia (UNDP-EUE) on the general situation in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Updates review major events in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda.

Information in this update has been obtained from media reports, UN agencies and NGOs; reference is made to the sources as appropriate. No claims are made by the UNDP-EUE as to the accuracy of these reports.

Regional

Training to combat drug trafficking

A joint US Customs Service and State Department training programme took place in mid-September in Addis Ababa with the aim of exchanging experience on ways to tackle the trade in narcotic drugs through countries of East Africa. Some 20 customs officials and anti-narcotic police from seven nations — Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Uganda — took part in the meeting. Speaking in a key-note address, the US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr. David Shinn, noted the importance of striving for better cooperation and the sharing of vital information among the anti-drug agencies and neighbouring countries. (*The Monitor*, 16 September 1997)

French Foreign Minister visits region

During a visit to the Ethiopian capital, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine announced that France would contribute more than US \$30 million during the coming year to support peacekeeping efforts by African states. Vedrine also said one million dollars would go to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) for the prevention, management and control of conflict in the region. Vedrine's visit follows a similar tour of the region last year by the then US-Secretary of State Warren Christopher when the US-backed idea of an African military force tasked with preventing conflicts and acting under the authority of the OAU was heavily promoted. This is said to have encouraged French support for African-led initiatives in situation where France in the past would have taken a more direct military role. (*AFP* 10 October 1997).

Economic integration seen as key to regional stability

A three-day forum on the theme of Economic Integration and Trans-Boundary Resources was held under the auspices of the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development in Addis Ababa from 8 to 10 September. In his opening address, Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, made a strong case for the integration of the economies of the countries of the Horn of Africa seeing this as central to future peace and stability in the region. "It is precisely for this reason that we view our sub-regional organisation, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) as both an instrument for economic integration and of peace and stability", he said. The forum brought together government representatives and scholars from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as well as delegates of the Somali National Salvation Council. Twenty-seven papers were presented at the forum on subjects ranging from sharing the waters of the Nile, environmental protection, food security, pastoralism and the management of trans-boundary resources. (*The Monitor*, 9 September 1997)

Tutu calls for debt cancellation

The outgoing president of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Archbishop Desmond Tutu, called for a moral crusade for debt cancellation in his address to the seventh general assembly of the AACC. He proposed four conditions to be met by debtor government for cancellation of their debts — true democracy which people participate in decision-making processes; respect for human rights; demilitarisation; and, the redirecting of money so saved into projects that benefit ordinary people. Human rights, good governance, social justice and poverty alleviation were also on the agenda of the assembly that was held in Addis Ababa from 4-10 October and attended by some 800 church leaders, women and youth from 142 member churches. (*The Monitor/PANA 4-5 October 1997*)

Richardson on regional visit

US ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, arrived in Nairobi on 27 October, after visiting the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Rwanda. In a statement, Richardson expressed the hope that “the Kenyan people will swiftly come to agreement on the next steps in their development as a democratic nation.” Richardson added that one reason for his visit to the region was to demonstrate US support for the peace talks between Sudan government officials and rebels due to commence in Nairobi at the end of October. Richardson later went on to visit Ethiopia and Eritrea to discuss American interests in Central and Eastern Africa and to brief government officials on his tour of the region. (*AFP 27/28 October 1997*)

Nile waters in demand

In a commentary on 11 October, the Voice of America predicted a possible scramble for the waters of the Nile early in the next century. Egypt, already planning major irrigation schemes in the western desert and the Sinai peninsular, is expected to increase its share dramatically. Meanwhile, Ethiopia, one of the riparian states, plans to build something like one hundred dams for agricultural and hydro-electric purposes. Sudan has also unveiled plans to build a high dam north of Khartoum. All the other riparian states have similar plans under development. The increasing demand on the Nile could lead to confrontations between nations unless the countries concerned can agree on a formula providing for an equitable share of the waters. (*VOA, 11 October 1997*)

Ethiopia

New Islamic opposition group

Ethiopian political and Islamic groups based in the Somali capital Moqdishu, have announced the formation of a new opposition alliance aimed at overthrowing the government of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The new organisation —the Oromo, Somali and Afar Liberation Alliance (OSALA)— claims that it has established a military force to fight against the current governments in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The group is said to comprise the United Oromo People’s Liberation Front (UOPLF), Oromo Abbo Liberation Front (OALF), Somali People’s Liberation Front (SPLF), Oromo People’s Liberation Organisation (OPLO), Afar People’s Liberation Army (APLA) and the Islamic Union of Western Somalia (IUWS). At a news conference held in Moqdishu on 5 September, the alliance vowed to put an end to “centuries of Judeo-Christian ideological hegemony,” in Ethiopia and Eritrea and install governments committed to the principles of self-determination for all people. (*AFP 6 September 1997*).

Tourist trade still low

The Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) announced that nearly 115,000 foreign tourists entered Ethiopia in the course of the last year. However, the immigration office and tour operators contend that less than half this number were genuine tourists, the remainder being aid workers and other categories of visitors entering the country by means of tourist visas.

Meanwhile, private tour operators have complained of backward and inefficient promotion activities abroad as the main reason for the low tourist trade in the country. It was said that ETC promotes tourism through exhibitions and trade fairs organised in only four European cities. (*Press Digest/Addis Zemen 4/11 September 1997*)

President says government ready to meet food crisis

In his new years' address to the nation, President Negasso Gidada underlined the readiness of the government to address food deficits in areas suffering from a failure of this year's rains. He said the government will give utmost priority to mitigating any food shortages while equally addressing the implementation of a long-term strategy aimed at achieving food security at the household level in drought-prone areas of the country. He said the government has already made the necessary preparations to respond to any relief needs and will be focusing its efforts on integrating the emergency activities of government bodies at all levels, the public at large as well as the international community and welfare organisations to tackle the problem. Dr. Negasso also noted that production prospects for the main season harvest were not all bad and food from surplus areas will still go some way to meeting needs in the drought affected regions. (*The Ethiopian Herald, 11 September 1997*)

Census underway in Somali region

The much delayed, housing and population census in the Ethiopian Somali National Regional State is finally underway in seven of the regions nine zones, according to official reports. Over 13,000 people have been deployed as enumerators, supervisors, interpreters and guides according to the census office in the regional capital, Jijjiga. In other reports, nine census workers were said to have been killed in an ambush on the main Kebridehar – Degehabur road in the central part of the region. Though the fundamentalist *al-Itahad* organisation was thought to be responsible for the attack, census officials later denied that any of their workers had been killed. (*Addis Zemen, Ethiopian Herald, others – September 1997*)

Power/water rationing

In a statement, the Ethiopian Electric Corporation announced regular power cuts throughout the country on a fortnightly schedule due to the low volume of water at two of its three dams. In a briefing given to reporters, the deputy general manager of ETC said that the amount of water that entered the Koka and Melka-Wakena dams during this years *kiremt* (main) rainy season was less by 43 and 22 per cent respectively, compared to the previous summer. In a related announcement, the inhabitants of the capital city, Addis Ababa, have been warned to conserve water due to low levels in local reservoirs. Making matters worse, out of the 58.4 million cubic metres of water distributed in the capital last year, 30 per cent was lost due to old leaking pipes and other defects in the system. (*Press Digest, 25 September 1997*)

Diplomats visit drought-stricken Tigray

Envoys from the European Union, the United States, Canada and the World Food Programme joined government officials on a two-day helicopter tour of northern Ethiopian regions facing famine and critical food shortages. During the visit, which took place early in October, the team was warned that as a result of poor rains in eastern and southern zones, a million people are threatened with severe food shortages in Tigray region. Regional President, Gebru Astrat, told the envoys that 450,000 hectares of land had been planted in the past year, but only a third of this area showed signs of producing any harvest. (*AFP 3 October 1997*)

Private university for Addis Ababa

Ethiopian and Jordanian investors are joining forces to set up a private US-style university in Addis Ababa, according to a statement released by the US Information Service. Ethiopia currently has only one comprehensive university and though some 21,000 secondary school pupils pass the entrance examinations every year, the university can admit fewer than half this number. (*AFP 7 October 1997*).

New banknotes for Ethiopia

In a speech delivered to the a joint session of the House of People's Representatives and House of the Federation, on 6 October President Negasso announced that Ethiopia would be introducing new Birr notes in the next few months. The measure was being taken to avert any complications and difficulties that might arise from the fact that Eritrea was about to launch its own new currency. According to Dr. Negasso, all necessary precautions had been taken so that members of the community would not face difficulties during the transition from the old birr notes to the new. The announcement led to doubts and uncertainties over the timing and modality of the transition. Meanwhile, arrangements are in hand to train one thousand men and women pooled together from various government and private banks who will execute the currency change. (*Press Digest, 9/23 October 1997*).

Anti-polio campaign to start soon

The Minister of Health, Dr. Aden Ibrahim, has announced that preparations are in hand for the launching of a nationwide anti-polio vaccination programme. It is planned that 8.6 million children under the age of five years will be vaccinated in two rounds to be conducted from the country's 27,000 health posts during the months of November and December. (*Press Digest/Addis Zemen, 23 October 1997*).

Coffee exports up

Ethiopia plans to export 160,000 tons of coffee this year and earned US \$360 million from the export trade in the past year, according to the Ministry of Tea and Coffee. The volume of exported coffee has shown a 9 per cent rise against the target set for the year and revenue up by US \$120.5 million. There is growing concern, however, over the impact of Coffee Berry Disease (CBD) on Ethiopia's export trade. CBD is already a major problem in the coffee growing areas of Hararghe and Kefa and appears to be spreading throughout the country. (*Press Digest/other sources, 23 October 1997*)

Eritrea

Afeworki says economy growing

In a wide ranging interview for the private Ethiopian paper, "The Reporter", President Issayas Afeworki stated that the Eritrean economy had grown by 4 per cent in 1995 and 6 per cent last year and is expected to grow further. Underlining the importance of fostering economic self-reliance, President Issayas went on to say that a study commissioned to examine the effectiveness of foreign grants and loans to the country had shown that no more than 65 per cent of funds promised ever reach the intended projects; "... there are a lot of delays; a lot of preconditions are set; and what is promised today takes more than a year before its reaches us", Issayas remarked. Referring to the anticipated introduction of an Eritrean currency, the Nakfa, the President said that in addition to providing a symbol of identity, this would give the country much greater economic flexibility and ease the drafting of monetary policies. It was also emphasized that the new currency would be introduced in such a way that would benefit trade relations with Ethiopia even though the actual mechanisms to be used are still being worked out by experts. On relations with Sudan, President Issayas said the source of the problems is the policy of the government in Khartoum and is not initiated or propelled by its neighbours. He went on to refute claims that Eritrean war commanders were assisting Sudanese opposition forces, dismissing this as "...mere speculation". (*The Reporter 17 September 1997*)

Eritrea denies military operations

According to Khartoum-based Eritrean dissident, Abdallah Idrisse Mohammed, head of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), Eritrea is planning "armed operations" against some of its neighbours. In a report quoted in the daily newspaper, *Alwan*, Mohammed named Sudan,

Yemen and Djibouti as targets but said that operations would begin first against Sudan. Meanwhile, Sudan has strongly denied that its forces launched an attack on Eritrean territory in September as claimed in some foreign media reports. According to Sudanese armed forces spokesman, Mohammed al Sanousi, "Our forces have not launched and will not launch any attack on Eritrean territories but will reserve the right to react in legitimate means". (AFP 29 September 1997)

New Red Sea oil concessions

The US Anadarko Petroleum Corporation has announced the signing of a Production Sharing Agreement with Eritrea's Ministry of Energy and Mines for 2.3 million acres in the Red Sea. This will be in addition to the company's existing block of 6.5 million acres agreed to in 1995. Anadarko plans to invest \$23 million for exploration in the new concession over the next five and one-half years. (Entrepreneur 15 October 1997)

Djibouti

New rebel clashes

In a series of clashes with Afar rebels on 1 September, at least 11 Djibouti government soldiers were reported killed and 16 wounded. According to rebel sources, the fighting followed a "sweep" by the government designed to clear the country of armed opposition elements ahead of elections set for December and plans to demobilise 8,400 of its 13,000 troops. Ahmed Dini Ahmed, former Prime Minister and now the Paris-based head of the Afar faction of the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), blamed the government for the clashes and said he was not informed of any rebels hurt in the fighting. The clash was the first since a peace accord was reached in December 1994 between the Djibouti government and a faction of FRUD. (AFP 2 September 1997)

Aptidon meets French premier

French President Jacques Chirac met with his counterpart from Djibouti, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, for talks in Paris on 4 September. In August, the French government pledged 30 million francs (nearly US \$5 million) to help Djibouti demobilise more than 8,000 troops. President Hassan Gouled later said the talks did not include discussions on the future of the French garrison in Djibouti currently numbering some 3,200 legionnaires. The matter would be left to await the expected visit of the French Defense Minister, he said. (AFP 4 September 1997)

FRUD members extradited

Three senior members of the Afar opposition movement, Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy were extradited to Djibouti on 28 September after being arrested in Ethiopia. The three were Ali Maki, military commander of FRUD, Mohammed Kadame, FRUD representative in Europe, and Mohammed Daud Shihim. Also extradited was Kadame's wife, Aisha Dabaleh Ahmed, who had been running a humanitarian agency supporting a reported 18,000 Djiboutian refugees in Ethiopia. The director of president's office, Ismael Omar Guelleh, later praised Ethiopia "...for their cooperation in combating banditry in the region." The extraditions from Ethiopia were followed by further arrests of alleged FRUD members in Djibouti all apparently in connection with the rebel attack that took place in an area close to the Eritrean border earlier in September. (AFP 28 September 1997 and 7 October 1997)

French lawyer deported

An outspoken critic of Djibouti's political system, French lawyer Arnaud Montebourg was deported on 5 October after attempting to enter the country to assist in the defense of Aref Mohammed Aref, a Djiboutian lawyer facing prosecution for attempted fraud. Montebourg, also a ruling Socialist Party member of parliament, was involved in an earlier case concerning an attack in 1990 on a Djibouti café frequented by French soldiers in which one

person died and 17 injured. He has also represented former foreign and justice minister Moumin Bahdon Farah, who last year was imprisoned for five months for an "offence against the head of state". (AFP 6/8 October 1997)

Kenya

Tourist trade suffering from coastal unrest

Recent violence in Mombassa and Malindi, the centre of Kenya's tourist industry on the Indian ocean coast, has resulted in a 50 per cent fall in the country's tourist trade, according to the Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers. Since August, some coastal hotels have reported mass cancellations though no tourist had been harmed in the disturbances. Members of the Association attributed the decline to exaggerated and inaccurate media reports in Europe. (The Monitor/PANA 13-14 September 1997)

Eldoret International Airport opens

The new multi-million dollar Eldoret international airport opened for the first passenger and cargo flights on 17 September, according to a report in the official Kenya Times newspaper. Weekly flights will initially connect the airport with Sharja in Saudi Arabia and Karachi in Pakistan. Other planned flights will connect Eldoret with major towns in the Great Lakes region. The construction of the airport began in 1995 amidst protests from Kenyan opposition parties, who questioned its viability. The opposition had also claimed that the building of the airport near a controversial Belgian-financed ammunition manufacturing plant could not rule out the clandestine use of the airport to ship arms to war-racked countries throughout the continent. (AFP 16 September 1997).

Opposition party breaks ranks

Kenya's Democratic Party broke ranks with other opposition parties and declared that it would be contesting the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held by the end of the year. In declaring himself a candidate for the presidency, party chairman Mwai Kibaki urged people to ignore a call by some opposition leaders to disrupt the polls or burn their voters cards. "We in the Democratic party believe that what has been achieved in the parliamentary negotiations is worth supporting," Kibaki said. (The Ethiopian Herald/Reuters 19 September 1997)

Bandit attacks lead to unrest in Garrissa

An upsurge in bandit attacks in Kenya's North eastern Province provoked an angry response from the residents of regional centre, Garrissa. Protestors carried placards denouncing the government for not controlling the security situation in this remote region adjacent to Somalia. When the protests turned violent, police were forced to use teargas to control rioters and scores were injured, according to reports published in the *Sunday Nation* newspaper. The wave of bandit attacks had led to the deaths of some 17 police and security officers in a single one week period at the end of September. (The Monitor/Reuters 30 September 1997)

New opposition party formed

The protracted internal battle for control over the opposition FORD-Asili party has ended with formation of a new party — Forum for the Restoration of Democracy for the People (FORD-People) — led by 1992 presidential aspirant, Kenneth Matiba. The party's subsequent registration brings to 12 the number of political parties in Kenya. Matiba, formerly the chairman of FORD-Asili, had been struggling with his secretary general, Martin Shikuku, for control over the party. (The Monitor/Agencies 5 October 1997)

Trouble over Mombassa port

A British company hired to streamline the operations of Mombassa port is withdrawing amid fears that productivity targets could not be achieved. Felixstowe Port Consultants signed the

two-year, US \$2.2 million contract in August last year but complains that the Kenya Ports Authority have not done enough to improve shore handling equipment as agreed before the agreement was signed. The presence of a reputable international consulting firm to run the port is among a number of conditions set by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for aid to the Kenyan government. (*The East African*, 8-14 September 1997).

Cholera in Kisumu district spreads

As of 16 October the death toll from a cholera epidemic in western parts of Kenya had risen to 200. The epidemic in Kisumu and other towns close to Lake Victoria is in its fourth month and is said to have been caused by poor hygiene and contaminated water. Provincial medical officials are calling the situation a crisis and have appealed to the central authorities for greater support in their fight to stop the epidemic from spreading further. (*The Monitor*, 16 October 1997)

Flooding causes deaths

Heavy rains along Kenya's Indian Ocean coast have caused extensive flooding and led to at least 18 deaths and made many thousands homeless according to official reports released in Mombassa on 21 October. Flights to and from Mombassa's main airport were disrupted for several hours after rain damaged navigational equipment and movement along the main Nairobi-Mombassa railway stopped after a section was washed away some 25 kms from the port city. (*The Monitor/Agencies*, 23 October 1997).

Still no date for elections

In a speech marking Kenyatta Day (20 October), President Moi gave no clue as to the date of the impending elections in the country but ordered a 10 per cent pay rise for civil servants and police. He said the raise would correct anomalies in public sector salaries since 200,000 teachers won larger awards after a 10-day strike earlier in the month. Going on to chart Kenya's progress since independence in 1963, Moi said two vices which remained to be eradicated were corruption and tribalism. "I caution all those who seek to continue engaging in corruption both in government and the private sector to stop forthwith," he said. (*The Monitor/Agencies* 23 October 1997).

Sudan

Mandela meets al-Beshir/Garang

President Nelson Mandela of South Africa met with rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang in early September. Mandela had expressed a private interest in assisting regional leaders in their search for a negotiated solution to the 16 year civil war in Sudan. Garang said that despite reports to the contrary it had never been his intention to meet Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir or attend joint talks during his visit to South Africa. He said he had come to the country only to brief Mandela on the latest developments in Sudan. Mandela had earlier hosted bilateral talks between al-Beshir and Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni over the fate of 21 Ugandan schoolgirls abducted by rebels last year and thought to be held in bases inside Sudan. (*The Monitor/AFP* 1-2 September 1997)

High level contacts raise hopes of improved relations with Egypt

Egypt and Sudan's foreign ministers held talks in Cairo on 21 September aimed at improving ties strained over a long-standing territorial dispute over the Halaib border zone and accusations of Sudanese involvement in the attempted assassination of President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Sudan's Ali Osman Taha said the meeting "has resulted in the possibility of resolving the problems between the two countries in a bilateral framework. A month later, Sudanese Vice President al-Zubir Mohammed Saleh met with

President Mubarak in the first high level visit to Cairo by a Sudanese official in more than a year. (AFP 21 September/29 October 1997)

Agreement reached to resume peace talks

Following regional ministerial talks held in Nairobi under the aegis of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) an announcement was made on 22 September that the Sudanese government and rebel SPLA movement had agreed to resume peace talks by the end of October. During the meeting which was chaired by Kenya's Foreign Minister, Kalonzo Musyoka, both sides had indicated their willingness to nominate six-member negotiation teams to attend the talks. Other issues discussed included mechanisms for negotiations, financial resources, logistical support, chief negotiators and the appointment of special envoys. Significantly, both Khartoum and the SPLA affirmed their acceptance of a "Declaration of Principles" agreed upon in 1994 as the basis for the negotiations. Earlier in July al-Beshir had stated that his government's change of mind was prompted by the realisation that the 1994 principles were not binding but "only a basis for negotiation". Garang later praised the decision of the military junta in Khartoum to return to negotiations saying that it was the "start of reason". (AFP 23/25 September 1997).

Washington flip-flops over Sudan question

Following news of the resumption of peace talks, confused signals emerged regarding the position of the United States. First there was a statement announcing the re-opening of the US embassy in Khartoum, closed 19 months ago in line with UN Security Council sanctions against Sudan. In the announcement released in Khartoum, the US State Department said that the security situation in Sudan permitted the stationing of a small mid-level diplomatic and support staff in Khartoum, adding that the ambassador (Timothy Carney) would continue to reside outside the country and make periodic visits. The move immediately attracted sustained criticism from US lawmakers who argued that such a move "...cannot be justified without significant progress on the human rights and a commitment to peace." (Democrat Representative, Donald Payne, in a letter to President Clinton). Sudanese officials were quick to praise the move as a first step towards better relations between the two countries. "I hope the return of the American mission is the beginning of serious dialogue between Sudan and America until it is possible to reach normal relations." Said deputy speaker of the National Assembly, Abdel Aziz Shido. However, under sustained pressure from Congress, Washington later reversed its decision in order to allow lawmakers time to consider a bill which would provide for further unilateral economic sanctions against Sudan. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Gare Smith, the bill would "...reflect the lack of Sudanese government action on issues of concern such as state-sponsored terrorism, aggressive actions against neighbours, failure to come to terms with the opposition in the civil war and an abysmal human rights record, including violations of religious freedoms." (AFP/The Monitor, 25/30 September 1997).

Mobilisation of students justified says defense minister

Sudan's Defense Minister, General Hassan Abdulrahman Ali, has justified the deployment of up to 65,000 high school graduates to the front lines against southern rebels on the basis of a shortage of regular troops. General Ali said that "all fit students, after undergoing training, have been attached to various armed forces units to make up the manpower shortage and to create a reserve for the general command." In his statement, made to the national assembly, Ali contented that the deployment was, "necessitated by foreign acts of aggression being waged against Sudan since last January." The statement followed an earlier motion by some 20 members of parliament demanding an explanation from the defense minister for his policy of forcing 12 to 18 months active national service on students before they are granted entrance to university. (AFP 2/7 October)

Food barges leave for Juba

Barges loaded with food relief have left the central Nile port of Malakal destined for Juba, the main city of war-torn south Sudan, according to reports from the UN World Food Programme. Juba, with a population of about 125,000, is under the threat of siege for the first time in several years as the rebel SPLA movement mobilises for its expected dry season offensive. WFP has chartered a convoy of barges to transport 2,664 tons of food across the front-line in the civil war. Staff will distribute the food to some 370,000 people in both government- and rebel-held areas, according to the agency. The convoy should reach Juba by mid-November. *(AFP 14 October 1997).*

Sudanese workers deported from Saudia

Up to 100,000 Sudanese nationals are being deported from Saudi Arabia where they have been working without legal permits or documentation. The deportees will be received at the port of Suakin on Sudan's Red Sea coast where reception arrangements are in place. In September, Saudi authorities ordered all illegal residents to leave the country and gave a deadline of 31 October for compliance. Another 500,000 Sudanese nationals are thought to be working in the country legally. *(The Monitor/PANA, 15 October 1997)*

Peace talks commence in Nairobi

After a one day delay, arising from Kenyan Foreign Minister, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka's, late return from the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting in Edinburgh, the Sudanese peace talks opened at a secret venue in Nairobi on Wednesday 29 October. Self-determination for southern Sudan and secularism were expected to dominate the talks where negotiator's representing Sudan's military junta and southern rebels were to meet face-to-face for the first time in three years. The Sudanese government delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammed Taha and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement by its second in command, Salva Kiir. The open-ended conference is taking place under the aegis of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, grouping Djibouti, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. *(AFP and others 29-31 September 1997)*

Somalia

Anger over Egyptian comments

Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland, has expressed anger that Egypt regarded him as a Somali faction leader and not head of a sovereign state. The remarks were made following the visit of an Egyptian delegation sent to the region in an effort to persuade Egal and south Moqdishu warlord Hussein Aideed to attend a Somali reconciliation conference in Bossasso being planned by the National Salvation Council as part of the Sodere peace process brokered by the Ethiopian Government and IGAD. Egal said he could not attend the Bossasso meeting of 26 Somali factions because his country was not part of Somalia. "We will not abandon our self-determination and join peace talks with warring parties in Somalia," he told his cabinet. *(AFP 2 September 1997).*

New clashes in southern Somalia

Fighting broke out early September when militiamen attacked villages in the Hudur district of southern Somalia. A spokesman for the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) said the attackers — from the rival United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance of Hussein Aideed — launched assaults on a number of villages killing at least 17 people and also burnt several houses. A spokesman for the USC/SNA subsequently claimed that the conflict had been instigated by the organisers of the planned Bossasso reconciliation conference in an effort to gain the attention of the international community. The fighting later spread to Bay and Bakool regions where the RRA launched a series of hit-and-run attacks on forces loyal to Aideed. The RRA is considered by Aideed as a terrorist organisation equipped and trained

by Ethiopia but is regarded by local Digil and Mirifle clans as a force fighting against local domination by outside clans. With the focus of the fighting switching to the strategically important town of Baidoa, on 29 September Ali Mahdi Mohammed accused Aideed's forces of massacring 260 and burning 20 villages in the region. A spokesman for Aideed's SNA faction later denied the accusations saying these were "...fabricated lies politically designed to discredit our effort at pacification in the bay and Bakool regions...". On 10 October the RRA claimed that it had captured Baidoa from Aideed's forces in heavy fighting that left 22 people dead. Two days later a spokesman for the RRA admitted that their fighters had been forced to withdraw from the town after the SNA counter-attacked with heavy weapons. (AFP/others, various dates).

Visit of "Tuur" creates problems for Somaliland

Police in the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland shot and wounded two students during a protest against a plan by the authorities to allow teachers to use the afternoon school session for private teaching. This followed an earlier demonstration when soldiers in Somaliland's army took to the streets of Hargeisa demanding higher pay. In another development, an estimated 5,000 people took to the streets of Hargeisa to protest against the presence in the town of Burao of Abdurahman Ahmed Ali "Tuur", vice-president in Hussein Aideed's unrecognised government in south Moqdishu. Tuur was said to have returned to his home town with an alleged war-chest of two billion Somali shillings (US \$230,000) with the intention of provoking a new round of political/clan fighting in the region. Tuur, the first president of Somaliland when it broke away from the rest of Somalia in January 1991, advocates a federal system for Somalia, which would include Somaliland. Tuur later left Hargeisa shortly before a 24 hour deportation order was due to expire. (AFP/others, September 1997)

New UN political supremo for Somalia appointed

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has appointed former British diplomat, David Stephen as head of the UN Political Office for Somalia. He will be based in the Kenyan capital where all other UN and non-governmental aid agencies working in Somalia have their headquarters. Stephen was previously head of the UN mission in Guatemala. (AFP, 1 October 1997)

Somaliland cabinet changes

A series of changes have taken place within the administration of Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, President of "Somaliland". On 21 September Egal sacked his military chief of staff, General Hassan Younis Habane, accusing him of incompetence. Later the interior minister, Mohammed Abdi Gabose, quit, accusing Egal of interference and not respecting him. The Somaliland government said Gabose had been sacked from the post for "incompetence and for not safeguarding national interests." Gabose, who was also formerly a cabinet minister and personal physician of Siad Barre, says he will be returning to medical practice. A few days after the resignation of the interior minister, the minister of "religious affairs", Hassan Ibrahim Fartag, resigned his post because he believes strict Islamic sharia law is not being implemented properly. (AFP various dates)

Bossaso conference postponed again

The Somali reconciliation conference planned for November 1 has been postponed and may not proceed as planned. The conference — intended as a follow-up to earlier meetings at the Ethiopian resort town of Sodere — had originally been scheduled to take place in June but had been delayed to allow time to persuade south Moqdishu warlord, Hussein Aideed, and president of the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland, Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, to take part. The new postponement is attributed to a lack of logistics for the expected 550 delegates and a shortfall in funds pledged for the conference by members of the Arab League and OAU. (AFP 29 October 1997)

Uganda

New loans granted by ADB and IMF

The African Development Bank (ADB) has granted Uganda loans totaling US \$62 million to finance structural adjustment and power rehabilitation projects. About two-thirds of the money will go towards a second Structural Adjustment Programme for the nation which "aims at ensuring stable economic reforms and liberalisation". The programme is co-financed by the World Bank. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund has announced Uganda will receive US \$56 million in loans this financial year in support of the country's current economic reform programme. *(AFP 5 September 1997).*

Insurgency in the west and north continues

Attacks by rebel Allied Democratic Defense Forces (ADF) in Uganda's western Bundibudgyo district have led to the deaths of some 83 people during the month of September, including 21 civilians. In one such incident early in September around fifty rebels launched a dawn raid on the market town of Nyahuka close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo which was already swollen by an encampment of several thousands of people displaced by earlier fighting. It is thought the rebels mistook the camp for a military detachment. Further to the north of the country, the Ugandan army has been engaged in a series of actions against insurgents of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the district of Gulu which borders Sudan. According to the New Vision daily newspaper, in two weeks of fighting the Ugandan army some 50 rebels. The LRA, led by Joseph Kony, a former Roman Catholic catechist, has been fighting for 10 years in a bid to overthrow the government of President Yoweri Museveni. Following the defection of the LRA intelligence chief in mid-September, reports emerged that Kony is presently trying to make his way to Kenya with a force of about 700 fighters after being expelled from Sudan. Meanwhile, according to a report released by the US-based Human Rights Watch on 18 September, the LRA is responsible for the abduction of between 3,000 and 5,000 children who are forced to take part in combat or act as servants. According to the report "Scar of Death", an equal number of children have escaped from captivity over the past two years and an unknown number have been killed. Human Rights Watch called upon the LRA to stop the abduction and torture of children and release those still in captivity. The organisation went on to urge the UN special rapporteur for Sudan to investigate the role played by Khartoum in the abuse of Ugandan children. *(AFP/others, various dates).*

AIDS awareness now high

According to AIDS Commission Director General, Omwiny Ojowok, at least 400,000 people have died of AIDS-related diseases in Uganda since 1984. Of the country's population of 18 million, some 1.5 million people are known to be living with the HIV virus although as a result of a high profile public awareness campaign, Uganda is now one of only a few African countries where the rate of infection is known to be declining. Ojowok, who was testifying before a parliamentary committee, said that around 90 per cent of Ugandans now knew how the disease was spread. *(The Monitor, 30 September 1997).*

Museveni meets Indian PM and British overseas aid secretary

Indian Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, paid a brief official visit to Uganda before travelling on to South Africa. After talks with President Museveni, Gujral signed agreements on air services and a cultural exchange programme. The weekend meeting closes any bad feeling between the two countries caused by former President Idi Amin's expulsion of the 72,000 strong Asian community 25 years ago. A few days later, British Overseas Development Minister, Claire Short, also made an official visit to Kampala where she signed a new aid agreement worth US \$32 million. In 1996-97, British aid expenditure in Uganda amounted to just under \$65 million, making Uganda Britain's fourth largest recipient of its bilateral aid worldwide. This was Short's first visit to Africa since being appointed secretary of state for international development by Britain's Labour government in May. *(AFP 5-7 October 1997)*

Failed rains cause problems for Karamojong

Erratic rains in Uganda's northeastern districts of Moroto and Kotido have resulted in severe hardship for the regions mainly pastoralist Karamojong. According the US Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), the last harvest was "very bad" with up to 60 per cent losses in one area. 40 per cent of the Karamojong are now exceptionally short of food following the sale of many cattle. Local officials fear that without assistance the region might face a famine worse than the one which decimated the Karamojong in 1980. *(AFP, 30 October 1997).*

UNDP-EUE
P.O. 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