

HORN OF AFRICA The Monthly Review

This update covers the period October - November 1998

REGIONAL ISSUES

Update on the Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict.

October was generally quiet along the disputed border. However, in the lead-up to the long-awaited meeting of the high-level OAU contact group, held in Ouagadougou on November 7 and 8, tensions rose considerably and skirmishing led to the precautionary evacuation of a number of towns and villages close to the border in Tigray.

On the diplomatic front, during the first week of October, both governments gave statements to the UN General Assembly on the dispute. Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, told the GA his country was trying its best to avoid war in its territorial dispute with Eritrea, but would stand up to the aggression regardless of the consequences. "The Ethiopian government and people firmly believe that this flagrant violation of international law...should not be left unchallenged".

The Eritrean Foreign Minister, Haile Woldensae, told the GA that the dispute was about borders, "pure and simple," adding that his country was ready to enter into an agreement, without pre-conditions, for "the cessation of hostilities and the peaceful resolution of the dispute by any method as the only acceptable solution".

Ahead of efforts to convene the high-level OAU meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on October 6 former US National Security Adviser Anthony Lake arrived in the region reportedly to back the peace-making efforts of the OAU. Lake met with the leadership in Ethiopia before travelling to Asmara for similar discussions with the officials. Lake again returned to the region November 10 to 15, visiting both Addis Ababa and Asmara as a follow-up to the Ouagadougou meeting. The results of neither mission were made public. A third visit is planned for late November.

On November 7-8, the OAU called the meeting of the high-level contact group in Ouagadougou, at which Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon (representing IGAD) were present. Based on the findings of the earlier OAU Committee of Ambassadors, the group proposed to delegations from Eritrea and Ethiopia, led by both Heads of State, respectively, an eleven-point "Framework Agreement" for the peaceful resolution of the dispute. Based on the earlier US-Rwandese plan, the eleven elements of the framework agreement were, in summary:

1. The two Parties commit themselves to an immediate cessation of hostilities;
2. In order to defuse tension and build confidence, the two Parties commit themselves to end any action and any form of expression likely to exacerbate the tension between them;
3. The armed forces presently in Badme Town and its environs be re-deployed to positions held before 6 May 1998 as a mark of goodwill and on the understanding that this will not prejudice the final status of the area concerned;
4. The redeployment to be supervised by a Group of Military Observers (GMO) to be deployed by the OAU with the support of the United Nations. The GMO also to assist the reinstated Civilian Administration in the maintenance of law and order during the interim period;
5. The redeployment be subsequently extended to all other contested areas along the common border, together with the demilitarisation of the entire border to be supervised by the GMO;

6. The two Parties commit themselves to make use of the UN Cartographic Unit, in collaboration with the OAU and other experts agreed upon by the two parties, to carry out the delimitation and demarcation of the common border within 6 months. Once the entire border has been delimited and demarcated, the legitimate authority will immediately exercise full and sovereign jurisdiction over the territory which will have been recognised as belonging to them ;
7. In order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date;
8. The two Parties commit themselves to put an end to measures directed against the civilian population, particularly those persons who had been deported; also to addressing the negative socio-economic impact of the crisis on the civilian population; and, in order to contribute to a climate of confidence, the OAU, in collaboration with the United Nations, to deploy a team of Human Rights Monitors in both countries;
9. A follow-up committee of the two Parties be established under the auspices of the OAU High-Level Delegation to determine the modalities for the implementation of the framework agreement;
10. The OAU and the UN to work closely with the international community to mobilise resources for the resettlement of displaced persons and the demobilisation of troops currently deployed along the common border;
11. The OAU, in close co-operation with the United Nations, will be the guarantor for the scrupulous implementation of all the provisions of the Framework Agreement, in the shortest possible time.

Following presentation of the Framework Agreement, Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary General of the OAU said both countries would continue to reflect on the proposals made by the committee and would make their positions clear in due course. The response of the parties would then be presented to a meeting of the OAU Central Organ for Conflict Prevention scheduled for December. Salim added that though a ceasefire had not been agreed in Ouagadougou, both leaders had agreed to the principle of respecting the border defined at the independence of Eritrea in 1994.

On November 11, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, told the diplomatic and international community in Addis Ababa that the Ethiopian government had decided to communicate a "definitive and formal acceptance" of the Framework Agreement to the Chairman of the High-level OAU Delegation. He also said that Ethiopia's firm acceptance of the OAU plan was entirely consistent with the government's preparedness to contribute to a successful resolution of the dispute through peaceful means.

(Sources: The Ethiopian Herald, AFP, Reuters, ERINA, ENA, WIC, Eritrean Embassy-Washington, Office of the Ethiopian Government Spokesperson)

Other regional news

Women entrepreneurs meet: The Second Global Women Entrepreneurs Trade Fair and Investment Forum took place from October 15-23 in Addis Ababa. A different country hosts this biannual event each time and its aim is to promote intra- and inter-African trade. The fair attracted 600 women exhibitors, investors from 42 countries, 25 international organizations, 8 UN agencies, the World Bank Group and the Commonwealth Foundation. The main theme of this forum was "credit and direct private investment for the enhancement of women entrepreneurs' participation in the global economy." The event was held under the auspices of the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs and the Ethiopian Women Entrepreneurs Association. The President of the Ethiopia Association, Yeshimebet Tessema, identified land-lease policies as a bottleneck for African women entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Tadelech Haile-Michael, Minister of the Women's Affairs Bureau in the office of the Prime Minister called on Ethiopian women entrepreneurs to organize themselves into strong associations to stand for their rights and to rely less on the government. *(Ethiopian Herald, October 21; The Monitor, October 15; The Reporter, October 21)*

Letter of Condemnation: The United Nations sanctions committee decided to send letters of condemnation to countries that have disregarded the UN air embargo on Libya. Eritrea was one of the countries named along with Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso. The five countries, however, claim that they acted in accordance with an OAU resolution to disregard the UN air embargo. This came after the Libyan leader Qadhafi conferred medals upon the African leaders who visited him for their courage. *(Monitor, October 29)*

Sudan speaks out: Sudan's Minister of External Relations Dr. Mustafa Uthman Isma'il said that Sudan will be most affected by the Ethio-Eritrean conflict because of the large number of refugees that will inundate it should an armed conflict ensue. He called on Eritrea to withdraw its troops from Sudanese and Ethiopian lands and to learn from its experience of the Hanish Islands. President Umar al-Beshir had earlier congratulated the Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Salih, on the decision of the international arbitration committee's ruling on the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Hanish islands in a letter given by the Sudanese Ambassador in San'a. Meanwhile, Sudan's Minister of External Relations said that talks with Ethiopia to normalise relations would continue. Reflecting the warming of relations between the two countries, according to various media reports, Ethiopia has told rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang to close down his office in the Gambella region that borders Sudan. In turn, the Sudanese government has agreed to curb the activities of Ethiopian opposition groups in its territory. (*AFP, October 25; AP, November 3*)

ETHIOPIA

Increased agricultural production: The Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation is predicting that Ethiopia's total agricultural production will show a ten percent rise in the current cropping year. This rise is being attributed to favourable weather conditions. Agriculture accounts for 50 percent of Ethiopia's GDP, 90 percent of the country's export earnings and 85 percent of total employment. (*Addis Tribune, October 2*)

Healthy economic growth: Brook Debebe, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Industry disclosed that Ethiopia is expecting an eight percent economic growth in the current fiscal year, which ends in June 1999, with the inflation rate well below four percent. Mr. Brook said that the government's removal of restrictions on hard currency transactions by state and private commercial banks helped speed up the economic growth. He also noted that the import-export trade has increased since the country started using the port of Djibouti. Meanwhile, in a move to boost the country's foreign earnings capacity, the National Bank of Ethiopia announced that the ban on *franco valuta* imports was lifted as of 25 September 1998 for exporters engaged in export trade and production. The government had banned *franco valuta* imports in July 1996 to discourage the domestic foreign exchange black markets and to combat contraband. (*The Monitor, October 29; Addis Tribune, October 9*)

Constitutional symposium considers human rights issues: Speaker of the House of the People's Representatives, Dawit Yohannes told a four-day constitutional symposium that more efforts should be made to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Federal constitution and the various government agencies should maintain transparency and accountability. A study paper presented at the symposium elaborated on the setting up of the soon-to-be-established Human Rights Commission and Office of the Ombudsman. The paper stressed that the institution should be independent, free and equipped with adequate budget and manpower to ensure people's human rights. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 7, 11 & 17*)

Swiss hand over bank documents: Swiss officials have handed over details of bank accounts linked to former Deputy Prime Minister Tamirat Layne. Tamirat and eight other people have been accused of embezzling US \$16 million, 8 million of which is in a Swiss bank account. The Swiss federal court had agreed in July to provide Ethiopian officials with pertinent banking documents related to the case subject to Ethiopia providing a guarantee by October 31 that the trial was being conducted in a fair and humanitarian manner. The documents released pertained to the bank accounts of Tamirat and two other unnamed individuals. Switzerland has blocked the transfer of the US \$8 million pending the conclusion of the trial. (*various sources*)

New brewery given go-ahead: The Ethiopian investment authority gave the go-ahead for the construction of a beer plant in the town of Akaki, 20 kilometers south of Addis. The plant, which will cost US \$40 million, will be implemented by the International Beverage Corporation. IBC consists of Ethiopian Investors who hold 51 percent of the shares and the African division of South African Breweries International. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 12*)

Dergue official dies in prison: An official of the former Mengistu regime, Colonel Teka Tulu died in prison while awaiting trial for charges of genocide and human rights violations. Teka Tulu died at the age of 62 of natural causes. The colonel was a former police officer and head of security under the "Dergue" regime. Of the seventy-one charged with similar human rights and genocide charges, 46 have appeared in court for trial while the rest like Mengistu Haile Mariam are in exile. The trial is now in its fourth year and the defendants face the death penalty if convicted. (*Reuters, October 10; The Addis Tribune, October 2*)

New development aid announced: The European Union has disclosed that it is making preparations for the launching of 13 new projects and programmes at a cost of over US \$600 million in accordance with the first and second financial protocol of the Lome IV Conventions. The various projects envisioned include road, water supply, education, food security, democratisation, and structural reform sectors. Meanwhile, the British development NGO, S.O.S Sahel, has signed an agreement to undertake development projects worth approximately US \$2.3 million in the Mekete woreda of North Welo. The organisation will conduct the projects over a seven-year period. In other news, the French Development Agency (AFD) granted approximately US \$9.5 million to the Addis Ababa water supply project. A statement from the French embassy said that the money would finance the Akaki Ground Water II project which will increase the water supply of Addis by 72,000 cubic meters. Meanwhile, USAID has signed two grant agreements totaling US \$23.4 million in support of Ethiopia's education and health sectors with \$12 million going to the education sector as part of an \$80 million bilateral Basic Education System Overhaul (BESO) programme. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 10, 18 & 18; AFP, October 15; Monitor, October 15*)

Prime minister on Asian tour: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi recently visited Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea in a ten day Asian tour. The Prime Minister and a high level delegation attended the African Development Symposium in Tokyo at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD -II). While at the conference, Prime Minister Meles met with the UN Secretary General Kofi Anan. The two discussed the Ethio-Eritrean conflict and the SG reiterated his support for the peace plan that was proposed by the OAU and endorsed by the UN Security Council. The Prime Minister also held talks with the Japanese Foreign Minister in which Japan pledged to further relations between the two countries. Meles also met and held talks with the South African Vice President, Tambo Mbeki and the President of Djibouti, Hassan Gouled Aptidon on international and bilateral issues. After his visit to Japan, the Prime Minister visited Malaysia where the two countries signed three agreements on economic, scientific and technical co-operation, and protection of investment. Finally, the Prime Minister went on to visit Seoul, South Korea where he met the President, the Prime Minister and representatives of major South Korean business associations. While there, Meles Zenawi signed an agreement on cultural exchange, attended a seminar on trade, toured various industrial facilities, and visited a monument commemorating those who died during the Korean war of 1950-53. Some 6,000 Ethiopians participated as part of the UN contingent in the war. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 21, 23 & 30; AFP, October 19 & 22; Addis Tribune, October 23*)

IMF resumes lending programme: The board of directors of the International Monetary Fund have approved the resumption of the three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) suspended in October 1997 amid concerns that the nation was slow in implementing its economic reform programme, especially in freeing-up exchange and interest rates. Under the ESAF mechanism, the IMF also decided to loan US \$42 million to Ethiopia for 1998-99 to underpin transformation of the country's financial sector, ease trade rules and raise standards of health and social security. The loan will be disbursed in two equal annual installments, the first of which will be made available immediately and the second after a further mid-term review. Finance Minister Sufian Ahmed said that the decision to resume the ESAF programme was based on Ethiopia's significant efforts in deepening economic reforms. He added that the new loan will lead to sustained economic growth and reduce poverty. (*Reuters, October 23 & 28; Ethiopian Herald, October 30*)

EAL looking for new skies: On October 27, the national carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, started a twice-weekly flight to New York. The fifteen-hour flight between Addis Ababa and New York is seen as a bridge connecting gateways to two continents. Addis gives access to more than two dozen other African destinations while New York has vast domestic connections provided by Continental Airlines. Anticipating additional traffic, the international airport at Addis Ababa is being expanded with improvements to the runway and a new terminal planned as part of a US \$115 million airport-expansion project. In related news, EAL resumed flights to Khartoum, Sudan and Beirut, Lebanon.

Flights to Sudan had been discontinued after an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was made in Addis Ababa in 1995. The flight to Lebanon had been discontinued for more than 20 years due to the civil war there. (*Reuters, October 11; AFP, September 25; Ethiopian Herald, October 30*)

Ethiopia still lacks roads: The General Manager of Ethiopian Roads Authority announced that despite the 110 percent increase in its road network since 1988, Ethiopia has one of the lowest road densities in Africa. Mr. Tesfamichael added that 80 percent of the goods and people movement in Ethiopia depends on traditional means of transport such as walking, head and back loading and animal transportation, which has resulted in high transportation costs and inaccessibility to agriculturally viable areas. Taking this into account, the government has organised a study for the formulation of a rural roads and transport strategy in 1999 which, when finalised, will create a new momentum for the development of rural roads. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 27*)

Iran and Ethiopia to co-operate: Ethiopia and Iran signed a technical cooperation agreement in the agriculture field. Iran's Vice Minister of Agriculture, Hussein Farr who was present in Addis for the signing said that Iran wished to cooperate with Ethiopia in the fields of agriculture research, irrigation development, water dam construction and horticulture. He also said that Iran would assist Ethiopia in the area of dam construction, and in the provision of agricultural supplements and spare parts. (*Ethiopia Herald, October 28*)

Ethiopian tourism commission reassures visitors: The Ethiopian Tourism Commission has outlined an advertising and marketing campaign to address visitors' security fears. An official of the Tourism Commission, Mr. Zeyede Haile noted that inviting foreign travel agents, tourism magazine publishers and journalists into the country to get a first hand look was one means of accomplishing the task. He also stated that although the tourist trade was not affected that much, "erroneous and exaggerated" statements by foreign embassies and international media coverage of the conflict with Eritrea could have a very negative impact on the tourist trade. (*The Monitor, October 26*)

ERITREA

Libyan delegation visits Eritrea: A seven member Libyan delegation completed a six-day visit to Eritrea. During the visit the delegation visited Nefasit, the port of Massawa and the Dahalak Islands. The delegates met with local authorities and arrived at an agreement with the Eritrean representatives to create "a specific framework for bilateral cooperation and information exchange in all domains". (*Reuters, October 1*)

Treasury Bonds to boost economy: The Central Bank of Eritrea has announced that it would start selling treasury bonds to raise funds to stabilize the economy. The first batch of treasury bonds, which mature in 2001 come in US \$300, \$500 and \$1,000 denominations but pay no interest. The new strategy is targeted at patriotic Eritreans living overseas and who are prepared to loan money to the government at no cost. The Eritrean economy has been under strain since the stand off with Ethiopia. The National Bank of Eritrea was expecting headline inflation to be seven percent in October as compared to five percent in June. The Eritrean Government is trying to cope by increasing the marginal rate of income tax by replacing the old system where citizens volunteered their salaries to the war cause. Citizens with earnings of around 200 Nakfa pay three percent while citizens with earnings around 8,000 Nakfa pay up to thirty-eight percent. (*Reuters, November 3*)

Hanish islands ruling: The Permanent Court of Arbitration passed a ruling in October on a three-year-old dispute over the ownership of the Hanish islands. The court's ruling granted sovereignty to Yemen over the three major islands and sovereignty to Eritrea over three small islands and islets. The court also ruled that traditional fishing practices should continue, allowing free fishing for both countries. The second phase of the arbitration will be to resolve the air space of both countries. Yemen and Eritrea both accepted the decision and Eritrean forces quickly withdrew from the Greater Hanish Island allowing Yemeni forces to take their place. The two countries also agreed to normalise their relations, with Yemen announcing that it will appoint an ambassador and resume flights to Eritrea. Within a few days of the Tribunal's decision, the Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister visited Asmara to convey a message of goodwill from the Yemeni President. Asmara reciprocated by sending its Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other

officials to offer their congratulations on the ruling and to discuss joint co-operation in various fields. Eritrea took the opportunity to congratulate the Yemeni President on the 35th anniversary of the revolution. An agreement was signed by the two countries to set up a joint committee to study programmes and plans to expand bilateral co-operation. (*Monitor*, November 3; *AP*, October 11 & 13; *Reuters*, October 13)

French grant for Asmara water supply: The French development agency, Agence Française de Development has announced a French Franc 28 million grant for drinking water projects. The financing will support the Asmara Water Services Department's institutional and technical services in the framework of a project costing some FFr 33.7 million. The new money will help in the completion of priority investments required to repair and rehabilitate several pumping stations. A similar grant has been announced by the French government to improve water supplies and services in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter*, October 24)

DJIBOUTI

Arms cache discovered: A large cache of arms was discovered in a residential home in the village of Oueha, Djibouti. Twelve people were arrested after the discovery by the gendarmerie. The people were mostly members of the Issa tribe of the Saad Moussa Clan. Among the people arrested were a first cousin and also a brother of former cabinet director Ismail Gedi Hared who served under Gouled Aptidon. The arms could be part of those distributed to Issa militia men during the time when the Djibouti regime was in armed conflict with the Afar members of Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie (FRUD). (*AFP*, October 1; *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, October 12)

New UNDP Resident Representative: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Djibouti Office has a new resident representative, Mrs. Afafa Abu-Hasabo. Mrs. Hasabo, a Sudanese, is an economist and has held a number of posts within the organization in Sudan, Yemen and Lebanon. Mrs. Hasabo will also represent the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). (*Indian Ocean Newsletter*, October 23)

French assist in demining: A joint demining operation by the French and Djiboutian armies has made safe 236 mines, according to Djibouti radio. The mines were destroyed along with rocket launchers and 82mm shells, the radio said. The French army contingent was in Djibouti to help clear mines from the town of Obock, some 250 kilometers to the north of the capital. Mines and weapons have been recovered and destroyed from the war between government forces and ethnic Afar rebels from 1991 to 1993. The demining programme is expected to continue for several months. (*AFP*, November 4)

France to "downscale" garrison: Charles Josselin, French Minister for Co-operation announced that a technical committee would meet in Paris on November 19 to discuss the consequences of the "planned and announced downscaling" of the French presence in Djibouti. Josselin also said that the commission would look at "the co-operation schemes that can be launched so that the people of Djibouti can take over on a number of issues". The announcement came after a meeting was held between Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon at Matignon. However, the two sides seem to have differences when it comes to the estimated amount of loss of revenue that will result and the means to lessen the impact. The French are waiting for studies that are being carried out by several ministries such as the defense, finance and development while the Djiboutians expect some financial compensation. France is thinking more in terms of reappreciation of development aid to Djibouti. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter*, November 6)

Trucks attacked in Djibouti: On the evening of October 31, a number of Ethiopian commercial trucks were ambushed some 40 kilometers inside Djibouti on the busy Eli Dar (northern) road. A group of armed men stopped a group of 5 cargo trucks and one fuel tanker. The tanker was fire upon and exploded killing the driver and seriously wounding another person. The other trucks were also set ablaze. According to diplomatic sources, the Afar opposition group, Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie (FRUD) was thought to be responsible for the attack. (*various*)

SUDAN

Fighting in the south continues...: The Sudanese government reports that it is gaining ground in its fight against rebel forces in the south of the country. In recent fighting, the military claims it inflicted 1,100 casualties among the southern rebels and their Ugandan allies in Eastern Equatoria State. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said from Nairobi that it was receiving many wounded at its facilities in the area. In another report, the military claimed that it had captured the towns of Mongalla and Negala and that the Juba-Torit road was again fully under its control. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), meanwhile, confirmed a report that its forces had withdrawn from the southern town of Lira, "for tactical reasons", which it had captured along with Negala, and other areas in Eastern Equatoria State in mid-September. Meanwhile, rebel forces reported that they used heavy artillery shelling on the garrison town of Torit to hinder reinforcements and denied the military's claims that they suffered many casualties. A bridge at Khor Inglis, 20 miles west of Torit was the stage for the greatest offensive put on by the rebels in 18 months. Fighting has also taken place in the central Mendi area of South Kordofan province where the military reported that it killed 50 rebels. However Eastern Equatoria seems to be the place where both sides are concentrating their fighting on. The SPLA spokesman in Asmara claimed that SPLA forces had shot down a Mig-23 in Eastern Equatoria and repelled government forces. While the government claims the plane crashed because of pilot error and that it is finalizing its victory in Eastern Equatoria and pursuing the fleeing rebels

...as government mobilises: As part of government efforts to accelerate mobilisation, the minister of higher education issued an order in late September suspending university studies for a month to enable students to fight the rebel forces. The Defense Minister, General Ibrahim Suleiman called on the national assembly to divert budget funds into a war budget and to intensify conscription with a target of 50,000 men. Since then, thousands of graduates from higher education have been reported to have gone to the war front in the south and more are awaiting deployment from Khartoum. Besides students, other national service conscripts have heeded the call to arms and are responding. Furthermore, a spokesman for the Military Service Administration said that his administration would immediately "commence taking legal measures" against public and private sector employees who have not responded to summons for military service. This goes in line with the governments plan to induct 100,000 Sudanese into the military over the next three years. Since Sudan's declaration of a general state of mobilization against the rebels and their allies, the pro-government South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF) militia men have been ordered to go to Juba to support government troops there. Juba is a southern government stronghold and the largest city in the south, which the rebels have been trying to capture for some years. (*The Monitor*, October 34, & 20; *AFP*, October 3 - 26; *IRIN*, October 8 & 9)

Bombing suspects on trial: Twenty six people are on trial in a military court in Sudan for nine separate bombings that took place on the anniversary of the 1989 June coup that brought the current government of Omar al-Beshir to power. The twenty-six people include two christian priests and two Muslims all from the south. The accused have been charged with attacking the regime, subversive acts, the creation of a terrorist and criminal organization and illegal possession of weapons. The majority face the death penalty if convicted. (*AFP*, October 5)

Contacts with Egypt continue: The Foreign Ministers of Sudan and Egypt have met again in an effort to improve bilateral relations between the two countries. The two ministers had met previously in Cairo during a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in September. Sudan-Egypt ties have been under strain since the 1989 coup that brought Sudan's leader General Omar El-Beshir to power. Although Egypt sent aid to Sudan's flood victims last month, there has been little progress on restoring Egyptian property confiscated in Sudan in the early 90's following a flurry of meetings on the issue that took place at the beginning of the year. Both countries accuse each other of harboring opposition forces undermining each other's governments. Following the latest meeting, Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail said that the two had agreed on "mutual efforts to normalise bilateral ties." In a related story, Khartoum has asked for an official explanation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's comments late last month in which he tried to justify the US decision to bomb the El-Shifa pharmaceutical plant. Information minister Ghazi Atabani told reporters that this "contradicts the officially declared Egyptian attitude and is inconsistent with efforts the Egyptian Government says it is exerting in support of Sudanese causes." (*AFP*, October 6)

Relations with Uganda and Eritrea remain poor: The official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) had reported that the Sudanese government had protested to the UN that Eritrea and Uganda have joined forces to launch an unprovoked attack. The government alleges that the USA is inciting neighboring countries against Sudan and that Uganda, Eritrea and mercenaries from Tanzania have joined forces with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to launch an attack in the East Equatoria region of southeastern Sudan. This protest had come after an accusation by Uganda that a high-flying airplane believed to be a Sudanese Antonov, had dropped bombs on its two northern towns of Pakele and Adjumani. SUNA had also disclosed that Sudan had made similar complaints to the Arab League, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Islamic Conference Organization, and the Non-Aligned Movement. The Arab League in return, had disclosed its concern over the escalation in southern Sudan and said that it was closely monitoring the "external threats targeting the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan." Uganda and Sudan broke off diplomatic relations in 1995 accusing each other of hosting rebel groups hostile to their respective governments. (*The Monitor*, October 6 & 8; *AFP*, October 5 & 6)

Rebels press for lifting of aid ban: The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has asked the international community to put pressure on the Sudanese government to lift its ban on humanitarian aid to areas in the south, Nuba mountains and the Southern Blue Nile state, "so that food and other relief services can reach the needy population". The pro-government *Alwan* newspaper on the other hand, reports that a branch of the SPLA made up of mainly Nuba tribesmen is currently fighting with government troops in the Nuba Mountains, making the provision of aid difficult. The SPLA also made an appeal for the splinter groups made of former rebels and the government who are fighting in the Western Upper Nile Region to stop the feuding and allow relief assistance to reach the area. Recently, both the SPLA and the Sudan government extended the cease-fire in the Bahr el Ghazal region for three months. The government however, has accused the SPLA of using the cease-fire agreement to shift its forces to Eastern Equatoria, the scene of the current fighting. The SPLA has been fighting the Sudanese government for 15 years. (*AFP*, October 7 & 8; *The Monitor*, October 6 & 10-11)

Sudanese refugees forced to return: The SPLA has denied reports that Sudanese rebels forced forty-one thousand Sudanese refugees in the northern Ugandan town of Dungu to return to the troubled southern Sudan and ransacked the UNHCR compound there. The SPLA said that the rebels in question were from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These rebels were reported to have stolen communication equipment and vehicles. Reports say that 8,000 of the refugees have arrived in Sudan and more are expected to come. The returning refugees lack food and all other necessities. Meanwhile, rebel forces in the northeastern Tokar region, near the border of Eritrea, withdrew after having occupied the area for more than four years. The withdrawal could be linked to drought in the area or could be a tactical move. In related news, Army spokesman General Abdel Khetim has reported that Eritrean troops are building up along the eastern border of Sudan and that although the situation is calm now, a confrontation was possible some time in the future. (*AFP*, October 1 - 13)

US missile strike - new evidence emerges: US intelligence sources disclosed that new evidence has surfaced linking Salah Idriss, owner of the pharmaceutical plant destroyed by a US missile strike, with the alleged terrorist mastermind of the US embassy bombings. The intelligence sources said that Idriss had financial dealings with members of the radical Islamic Jihad based in Egypt. Islamic Jihad is part of Bin Laden's network of armed radical Islamic groups. Idriss denies any involvement with bin Laden or the Jihad. Meanwhile, US federal prosecutors added two charges against the Sudan-born Mahmud Salim, alleged associate of Osman Bin Laden, who was arrested in Munich, Germany two months ago. The new charges are 'murder conspiracy' and 'use of a weapon of mass destruction'. Salim, who was described by prosecutors as an influential adviser to Bin Laden, is expected to be extradited to the US. Another report from the *New Yorker* magazine said that the US missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan were kept so secret that only the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staffs had foreknowledge until the day before of the actual strikes. The magazine also said that Attorney General Janet Reno had had reservations about the amount of evidence gathered linking Bin Laden to the targets and even about bin Laden himself and had warned the White House prior to the attacks. Meanwhile, the Sudanese government has agreed to meet with the United States directly to discuss the missile air-strikes. The government believes this could be achieved through the Foreign ministers in Khartoum and Washington. Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail also said that Sudan would continue to pursue the matter with the UN Security Council. (*AFP*, October 2, 4 & 5; *The Monitor*, October 10-11; *New Yorker* magazine, October 12)

Rebels meet in Asmara: The leaders of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a rebel organisation opposed to the Sudanese government, met in Asmara to discuss the unification of their armed factions and consider propositions for restructuring their alliance by the Umma party. The NDA's other members rejected the idea of a restructuring. The discussions, however, centered on an adoption of a stand towards the owner of the Al Shifa Pharmaceutical plant that was bombed by the USA, Salah Idriss. The secretary general of NDA came under criticism for writing a communiqué on behalf of NDA denouncing Idriss and taking more or less a similar stance to the USA. The NDA committee, however, had been careful not to mention the name of the owner and blamed the Sudanese government for opening the door for terrorist activities. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 12*)

WFP delivers food by barges: By mid-November, the World Food Programme had completed transporting 1,244 tons of food to about 100,000 Sudanese at about 40 locations along the Sobat river in the Upper Nile state. WFP announced that the three-barge convoy, which had been scheduled to leave from the port of Kosti in White Nile State in July, had been delayed due to unavailability of barges and security concerns. The barges have already delivered 300 tons of food to 5 towns. Meanwhile, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast has visited East Africa to explore how the UN can help end the war. The visit came as a response to a call by four non-governmental organisations (Save the Children, Médecins Sans Frontiers, Oxfam, and CARE) for a more active role to be taken by the UN Security Council. (*IRIN, October 13 & 28*)

Flooding aftermath: The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that the medical effects of the flooding that took place in seven states is beginning to show in Sudan. Already, increases in malaria, diarrhea and other water borne diseases are on the rise with large areas still covered with stagnant water. The potable water and sanitation problems are worsening with tens of thousands homeless people without adequate food. The OCHA Sudan situation report disclosed that the UN and other NGOs are conducting relief work but are not addressing all the flood-related needs. In related news, an outbreak of diarrhea has claimed the lives of 43 people and 119 others were admitted into hospitals in Omdurman. Experts fear that the outbreak might have been caused by cholera although official claims do not confirm this fear. (*IRIN, October 12; AFP, October 11 & 21*)

New law opens the door for opposition parties: Sudan's cabinet passed a bill allowing the return to multi-party politics. The bill allows any group with more than 100 eligible voters to form a political organisation, provided it is committed to freedom, consultation and democracy, and whose leaders are elected in free direct or indirect elections. Opposition groups however, have criticised the bill because it requires that the political party in question abide by the constitution passed in July (which opposition groups rejected). The bill is also believed to weigh heavily on the side of the ruling party because it says that the leaders of opposition parties must not consist of anyone convicted of treason, the use of violence or force against the constitutional system, or any other crime breaching honor and honesty in the last 7 years. The word 'party' is also conspicuously missing from the bill. President Beshir stated "there is no reservation whatsoever on the return of a political organization or a person, as there is no political isolation law, unless a person is convicted in court of high treason or a crime related to honor and honesty." An Umma party official, Abdel Salam, has renewed his parties call for setting up a transitional government representing all parties "to consider the main problems" and emerge "with appropriate solutions". Meanwhile, parliamentary speaker Hassan Abdallah al Turabi has announced that the ruling National Congress, whose Chairman is President Omar el-Beshir, will register as a political party as soon as the bill becomes law. The bill must first be passed by parliament in order to become law. Opposition leaders have warned that the passage of the bill would mean that the door for reconciliation was closed. (*AFP, October 15 - 21*)

Congolese president makes secret visit: President Laurent Kabila paid an unannounced visit to Sudan's President Omar el- Beshir. The state run Omdurman radio reported that the two leaders "reviewed the Ugandan-Rwandan invasion" and the actions that were taken to repel the attack. President Kabila accuses Uganda and Rwanda of backing the Tutsi rebels while he has the backing of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad. The Tutsi rebels in turn claim that Sudanese forces are fighting along side Kabila's soldiers. Kabila's visit was officially made known only after his departure. (*AFP, October 17*)

SPLA and government meet: The SPLA's political wing and the Sudanese government representatives met in Warsaw to attend a symposium on reconstruction and development in Sudan organized by the United Nations Development Programme. The Sudanese delegation was led by the Minister for International Development while the SPLA was represented by the movement's Secretary for Trade and Humanitarian Aid. The agenda covered the role of international and regional organizations in the process of rebuilding countries, the changeover from a war economy to a development economy and economic prospects in southern Sudan. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 23*)

Politically motivated robbery: A Member of Parliament said that political saboteurs were behind the robbery of Sudan's central bank involving 2 billion Sudanese pounds (about 1 million US dollars), adding that the group responsible was called "National Redemption" and came from a cell in the armed forces with ties to exiled opposition leaders. The group reportedly issued a statement claiming responsibility. Three of the robbers have been captured with 300 million Sudanese pounds in their possession. Nineteen men wearing military uniforms and driving a vehicle with government license plates carried out the robbery. A hostage they had taken and his car, which they had used as their means of getaway, were later found by the side of a road. The businessman suffered some injuries and was taken to a hospital. Meanwhile, Sudan's President Omar el-Beshir has declared an emergency in four states to combat armed robbery. (*AFP, October 20 & 21; The Reporter, November 4*)

SOMALIA

Djiboutian plane in Somali custody: The crew of a Djiboutian plane, five Russian crewmen and a Djiboutian hostess were detained after the plane landed at the north-eastern Somali port of Bossaso. The plane was coming from Yemen via Djibouti. Officials in Bossaso said that the plane was attempting to drop refugees and the crew will be charged with abandoning refugees on the airstrip. Ibrahim el-Khalil, the managing director of Air Djibouti, said that the 15 passengers were not refugees. The airline chief said that the crew was being held in a hotel under good conditions. Air Djibouti is a private company, which owns the Antonov-26 plane. (*AFP, October 12*)

Aideed travels overseas: Mohammed Hussein Aideed, leader of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) recently visited Yemen before travelling on to Malaysia where he visited the Adorna company. Adorna has projects in Moqdishu and is believed to have printed the bank notes for Aideed and his supporters. Aideed also made a visit to Qatar where he addressed leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states asking them to seek a solution to the Somali crisis during their summit. The six GCC states: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will meet in Abu Dhabi for their annual summit December 7 -9. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 12; AFP, October 20*)

Clan rivalry brings more bloodshed: A clash between two rival clans has resulted in the deaths of ten people including four civilians and fifteen wounded. Militiamen loyal to Mohammed Hussein Aideed opened fire on the men of rival warlord Osman Hassan Ali "Ato" in south Moqdishu as they were extorting money from vehicles at a roadblock they had setup on the Moqdishu-Afgoi road. Fighting also broke out between Wa'aysle and Murursade sub-clans leaving seven dead and twelve wounded. The two have been making house searches and executing each other's leaders over the murder of a businessman in Moqdishu. Elders and surviving sub-clan leaders have gone into hiding. Meanwhile, the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) has claimed that it has driven out Aideed's men from the Bakol region of south central Somalia. However, a spokesman of Aideed's SNA faction denied the claim and said that they were withdrawing from the Bay and Bakool regions to facilitate the holding of the Somali national reconciliation conference as agreed by Somali clan factions in Cairo in December of 1997. In related news, fresh fighting has broken out between the Somali National Front (a Marehan clan militia) and Somali Patriotic Movement (an Ogadeni clan militia) for the southern Somali port of Kismayo. The fighting broke out after General Bile Rafle, a Marehan, was kidnapped by Ogadeni militia allied to warlord Mohamed Hersi "Morgan"'s Majerten group. The man was later released after an intervention by elders but not before four people had died. A spokesman for the Somali National Front has declared the town a war zone and warned all aid agencies and traders not to use the port. The sub-regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has called for an immediate cease-fire and for both sides to try to resolve their differences through dialogue. Fighting has also broken out in the El Wak district, bordering Kenya, between the same clan militias. An estimated sixty people have died and forty wounded in the continued fighting. Other exchanges of

fire have been reported in north Moqdishu between the Ayr and Sa'ad sub-clans, and in south central Somalia between Darod and Ayr sub-clans. (AFP, October 13 - 31, November 4 & 8)

Cholera programme halted: A warlord in control of northern Moqdishu, Ali Mahdi Mahmoud, has asked European Union donors to end a cholera programme run by Médecins Sans Frontiers. The warlord accused the organisation of not being "professionally committed" to the programme. MSF was the only agency working in the area while other agencies had evacuated due to security concerns. MSF had had ten workers kidnapped in June and had evacuated most of its workers for fear of their safety. An MSF spokeswoman said that MSF was in the process of trying to negotiate security access for its workers to return. (The Reporter, October 14)

Plight of the boat refugees highlighted: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has announced that an estimated two hundred and fifty Ethiopian and Somali refugees have died at sea while trying to reach Yemen this year. Since January of this year, 9,400 including Ethiopians and Somalis have arrived in Yemen by sea. The UNHCR explained that desperate refugees use boats manned by arms smugglers who frequently order them to disembark at sea to avoid the Yemeni coast guard. There have also been reports of exchanges of fire between the coast guard and the smugglers resulting in casualties. There are currently 65,000 Somali refugees in Yemen. (AFP, October 16 & 19)

A Warning to Egypt: In a recent broadcast, a radio station allied to Moqdishu strongman Osman Ali "Ato" sent a warning to the Egyptian government to desist from interfering in Somali affairs by giving aid to the Benadir Region administration. This was in reference to an earlier report of Egypt giving tinned foods and medicines to the police force of the joint administration of Moqdishu ran by Ali Mahdi, Mohammed Afrah and Hussein Aidid. The broadcast noted that Egypt had been supplying the administration with weapons (in violation of a UN declaration), medicines and food. The broadcast warned that "necessary action" would be taken against Egypt if the appropriate bodies did nothing to stop Egypt's efforts to prolong the civil war. (AFP, October 21)

Human development: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced that the low levels of human development of the country constitute a long-term emergency. In its first Somalia development report, UNDP disclosed that the average life expectancy is 41-43 years, the mortality rate for children under five years is greater than five percent and the adult literacy is below seventeen percent. The report noted that such conditions, so common in Somalia, would be considered a national emergency anywhere else. The UNDP Somalia chief, Dominik Langenbacher, mentioned that non-government organizations need to work more on sustainable human development rather than on emergency aid. (AFP, October 26)

Somali reconciliation revisited: Warlord Mohammed Hussein Aideed visited Egypt to appeal to the Arab League for financial assistance for the convening of the much delayed conference aimed at achieving national reconciliation. Somali leaders had agreed to hold a national reconciliation conference that would be held in Baidoa to discuss ways to bring peace to Somalia back in December of 1997. Warlord Abdel Meguid noted that an estimated five million dollars were needed to host the conference. A national charter signed by twenty-six Somali warlords in December of last year has not been implemented. Meanwhile, a one-day meeting in Ethiopia which featured regional and western ambassadors and representatives of international organizations to address the Somali issue has been held. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), under whose auspices the meeting took place, announced that "a new joint ownership of the reconciliation process" had been decided and that this committee would make preparations for the reconciliation conference to be held at Baidoa. Ethiopian Kifle Abreha, IGAD director of political and humanitarian affairs, announced that a decision had been made to assist administrations and other peaceful constituencies in Somalia. (The Monitor, October 24; AFP, November 2 & 5)

KENYA

HIV-AIDS: The Kenyan Health Ministry reported that 256,750 people have died of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) since 1980 and an estimated five percent of the population has been infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) virus. (Reuters, October 8)

Reduced Investment: The Kenyan central bank's Economic Review for October indicates that although entries of short-term capital are up, private investment and international financing for projects is down. The balance of payments shows that Kenya's surplus is on the decline from US \$429 million in August 1997 to US \$142 million in August this year. This was the result of a drop in long-term capital entries from US \$297 million to \$238 million on account of the IMF's suspension of its financing and the negative effect of this on other bilateral and multilateral donor organizations. The review also indicated that entries of private capital have declined considerably. (*Indian Ocean News Letter, October 12*)

Coffee industry faces problems: Dr. James Nyoro, an agricultural policy analyst at Egerton University has concluded that the liberalisation of the Kenyan coffee industry is partly responsible for the current problems in the sector. Nyoro argued that the new system of coffee management is open to abuse and weakens farmer's institutions. In the previous system of pool payment, all producers sent their coffee to a central auction. After all the yearly coffee was sold, the prices were determined and the farmers were paid. The advantages of the system included its insurance of best possible returns, the security it afforded, and the degree of transparency and accountability it made possible. In the new and modernised coffee auction, farmers appoint their own brokers thereby insuring maximum attainable prices for their coffee. Drawbacks included delays in payment and vulnerability to price fluctuations, which were previously borne equally by all producers. The old system also paid average prices per grade irrespective of the quality of the coffee at the time of sale, meaning that high quality producers compensated the poor quality producers. The new system of direct coffee sales and payment system faces the same problem of price fluctuations, and lack of transparency and accountability. Under this new system, instituted in 1992, farmers can choose to either go the pool route or sell their coffee direct. Farmers lose money when the dollar appreciates and do not get all the benefits from its depreciation because of lack of accountability. (*The Nation, October 14*)

Interpol coming to Kenya: The International Criminal Police Organization announced that it would soon open a sub-regional office in Nairobi to fight international terrorism and other crimes. The agreement was signed between the Kenyan Foreign Minister and Interpol's president. The Kenyan Foreign Minister said that Kenya was currently Interpol's regional telecommunications station serving nineteen countries in the eastern, southern and central African regions. Meanwhile, the Kenyan police force issued a report showing a rise in violent crime, such as rape and murder, over the past decade. Cumulatively, however, the report shows a decline in criminal offences from 71,783 in 1988 to 48,782 in 1998. (*The Monitor, October 16 & 17*)

Ethiopians illegally in Kenya: The Kenyan government is believed to be preparing to conduct police raids in areas suspected to be havens for Ethiopians living in the country without valid residence permits. This will be problematic for some Ethiopians who have associations with the ousted Dergue regime and for others who have affiliations with Ethiopian opposition forces such as the Oromo Liberation Front. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 23*)

New Ombudsman post: The Kenyan Parliament has unanimously approved a motion by the National Development Party to create a post of ombudsman. The approval comes as a bit of a surprise since similar motions had been attempted five times in the past without success. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 23*)

Comfortable retirement for ex-presidents: A bill before the national assembly aims to ensure that retired presidents can live comfortably. The bill, proposed by opposition MP Anyang' Nyong'o, pays retired presidents US \$400,000 a year, and grants the president a furnished house with a guest wing, swimming pool and a sauna, a furnished office, a staff of 27 including two cameramen and the use of three limousines. The idea is to get presidents to be willing to retire instead of clinging to power. (*Reuters, October 31*)

Massacre in north-eastern Kenya: Boranas and members of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) have been accused of massacring about one hundred seventy-three men, women and children of the Somali-speaking Digodia tribe in north-eastern Kenya on October 25. The raiders, numbering about five hundred, attacked the villages of Budada, Gerari, Tuli, and Muduma in the Bagala area of the northern Wajir district plundering livestock and kidnapping people, mostly teenage girls. The Boranas, an ethnic group concentrated mainly in Southern Ethiopia, have long been rivals of the Somali Degodia over grazing land. The Degodia said that the attacks were the result of the Borana

perception that the Degodia were encroaching upon the Borana's land. The Kenyan government has announced that it was launching an investigation into the claim that some of the raiders were Ethiopians. The Ethiopian government has released a statement saying that there are no OLF camps on its side of the border. The statement also said that the government was disturbed over Kenyan reports that said "Ethiopian militiamen" were involved in the attack suggesting that government troops were involved in the massacre. The OLF also released a statement saying that its forces were not involved in the attack and blamed the Ethiopian government of attempting to alienate the OLF both internally and externally. Meanwhile, the Kenyan government has sent military reinforcements to the areas to bolster security and discourage any such future attacks. (*Reuters, October 31; AFP, October 31; The Monitor, November 3*)

UGANDA

Museveni visits Libya: President Yoweri Museveni visited Libya and held talks with the Libyan leader Qadhafi and the leaders of Eritrea, Chad, and Niger on issues concerning developments in Africa and how to bring about closer co-operation between themselves. The Libyan leader had indicated that he would try to get Museveni to agree to replace the Ugandan and Rwandan troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo by an "African force". (*AFP, October 1*)

67 million pounds from Britain: The British government has announced that it is donating £67 million (approx. US \$112 million) to Uganda to fund improvements to the country's education system - a plan for universal primary education by 2003. Meanwhile, the German Embassy has announced that Germany has pledged to grant Uganda US \$3.7 million in its 1999-2000 fiscal year period. A press release from the embassy in Kampala described Uganda as a role model for Africa and commended her efforts in the area of democratisation, a judiciary based on the rule of law and Kampala's anti-corruption efforts. (*AFP, October 2 & 19*)

Charging for the Nile: Uganda has indicated that it wants to charge Egypt and Sudan for using the Nile because Uganda is one of its main sources. Otherwise, Uganda believes that it should have the right to divert the waters for agricultural projects. The three countries are still bound by a 1929 colonial treaty which stipulates that if any of them wants to implement a major project on the Nile the others should be consulted first. (*AFP, October 9*)

Inquiry into the death of a colonel: Yoweri Museveni has ordered an official inquiry into the circumstances around the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Jet Mwebaze. Mwebaze had died after the Cessna taking him to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) crashed between Beni and Buta (DRC) along with 9 other people. Five of the crash victims were rescued in the mountains while there have been some eyewitness accounts saying that the lieutenant colonel and some others had in fact survived the crash and were last seen alive being taken by rebels of the Allied Democratic Force (ADF). Meanwhile, the Rwandan New Times newspaper has reported that Mwebaze was involved in an international gold and money laundering syndicate managed by Saleh, President Museveni's brother, and was on his way to the part of the Congo under the control of his brother, Brigadier Kazini, on a "gold-buying mission". Saleh also allegedly let the Ugandan soldiers in the DRC go out of control which has created a rift between Ugandan and Rwandan forces in the DRC. The Ugandan military presidential adviser flew to Rwanda to settle the rift. Uganda and Rwanda are charged with helping the Tutsi rebels to oust Kabila. (*Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 12; AFP, October 4, 5 & 14*)

No-fly zones declared by the army: The Ugandan Army has declared Kampala and the industrial town of Jinja as no-fly zones. Army Commander Jeje Odongo said that the decision came as result of growing violation of Uganda's airspace and as a security measure against threats from Sudan. A Sudanese Antonov plane had allegedly bombed the two northern towns of Adjumani and Pakele in September. The Sudanese government denies such claims. The independent newspaper *Monitor* reported that the ban includes all commercial, charter and scheduled flights. Meanwhile, a private radio reported that the Ugandan military had deployed troops to the two northern towns, presumably to ward off Sudanese air attacks. In a move that the Ugandan military commanders said was to seal the frontier with Sudan, the Fourth Army Division moved its headquarters to the border. Uganda has denied Sudan's claims that Ugandan forces are fighting alongside the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and in turn accuses the Sudanese government of supporting at least four Ugandan rebel groups. (*IRIN, October 6 & 9; AFP, October 4, 5 & 9; The Monitor, October 8*)

ADF camps destroyed: The Ugandan army reports that it has destroyed eighteen camps belonging to the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The army said that it also rescued 222 hostages. The camps in question were located in the Rwenzori Mountains. The ADF which is an alliance of the Tabliq Islamic sect and fighters of the moribund National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, and former soldiers of Rwanda and DRC, which had been taken alive in battles and now have changed alliances. (IRIN, October 12; AFP, October 11)

Forced recruitment: Allegations by Tigers, an NGO, that the army was forcing street children and older people into the army was refuted by the Ugandan National Council for Children (NCC). The NCC said that the NGO did not present enough evidence while the Tigers management claims that there have been reports of trucks seen taking the street children away as well as street children who claim to have escaped from lorries taking them to camps and from training camps. The Ugandan Human Rights Commission said that they had not heard any other reports. (AFP, October 13 & 23)

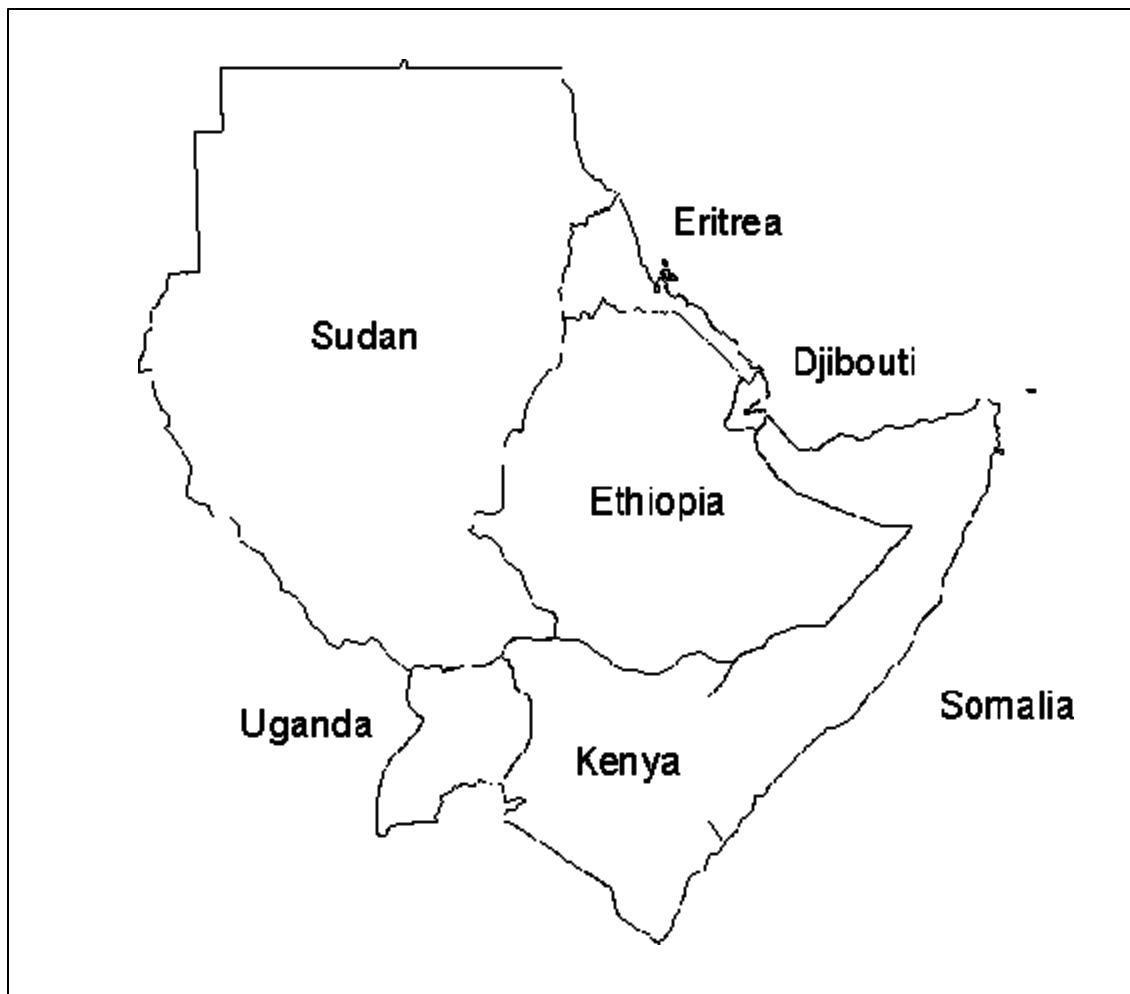
Three aid workers killed: Three Sudanese workers of Norwegian's People's Aid (NPA) were killed after their convoy was attacked and looted on its way back from western Equatoria. The attack took place in northern Uganda near the Sudanese border. The attackers are thought to be members of the rebel West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and supporters of the Sudanese government according to Uganda. The convoy has just returned from the Bamurye Camp where it delivered relief supplies to 15,000 displaced persons. The attack seems to be targeted at destabilising one of the most stable areas under SPLA control. The NPA has disclosed that it is reviewing security arrangements with the Ugandan government to continue deliveries to the area. (IRIN, October 19; AFP, October 17)

Good harvest recorded: The October report of the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) indicated that cereal and tuber production was mostly good except for two districts which will require continued food aid deliveries. The report also indicated that due to the increased supply of dry maize grain, prices are dropping in both the production and consumption markets. Meanwhile, the state owned Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) said that Uganda's coffee exports dropped by ten percent in volume and in value in September as compared to the same month the previous year. The report also indicated that the price for a bag of coffee was US \$1.56 as compared to US \$1.40 the previous year. (AFP, October 8; WFP Emergency Report, October 23)

Who's who in the DRC conflict: Tutsi rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo have taken at least sixty-two Ugandan rebels as prisoners when they captured the eastern DRC town of Kindu. Uganda has demanded that they be handed over immediately. Ugandan rebels are aiding Kabila's forces while the Ugandan military together with Rwandan troops are allegedly backing the Tutsi rebels. Uganda claims that it is controlling several airstrips in eastern DRC because it wants to prevent Sudan from backing Ugandan rebels in the DRC. Uganda also claims that it is watching out for the interests of the Tutsi ethnic group, which it says is being systematically attacked by troops loyal to Kabila. The Ugandan Foreign Minister has threatened retaliation should Zimbabwean troops (which back Kabila) attack Ugandan troops in the DRC which are supposedly there to protect against rebel infiltration into Uganda. Meanwhile, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia have announced that they would launch an offensive in eastern DRC against the rebels. In a related news item, the US special envoy to the Great Lakes region, Howard Wolpe, met with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The discussions centered around the idea of implementing a cease-fire and negotiations between opposing groups. At a summit that took place in Nairobi, Kenya's President along with the presidents of Tanzania and Uganda proposed an international peace keeping force in DRC and negotiations between the rebels and Kabila. (IRIN, October 23; AFP, October 7 - 26)

LRA splits into two factions: The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has split into two factions over the treatment of civilians. The New Vision newspaper reported that the new leader of the second faction, known as LRA-Democratic, is Ronald Otim Komakech. In related news, the LRA, the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), the Ugandan National Rescue Front (UNRF-2), the Allied Democratic Front (ADF), and the National Freedom Army (NFA) have formed a coalition in their fight against the Ugandan government. They also called on the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to "support the rights of Ugandans to struggle against the dictatorship of Museveni." (IRIN, October 23; AFP, October 31)

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.

23 November, 1998

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