



October / November 2000

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Djibouti

Armed police protest against an unexpected transfer of police chief.

### Eritrea

World Bank approves US\$ 90 million to mitigate effects of war and drought.

### Ethiopia

Central Statistics Authority projects population to reach 129 million by 2030.

Court passed jail sentences on former Dergue officials.

### Sudan

Bombing on Southern Sudan civilians.

Sudan government troops recaptured Hameshkorib.

### Kenya

Illegal drink kills 140 people and hospitalizes more than 400.

Violent land clashes leave four people dead.

### Somalia

90 people die of Cholera and 200 are getting medical treatment.

Egal pardons those who participated in the Arta conference.

## REGIONAL ISSUES

**FAO and Italy appeal for US \$150 million dollars:** On November 29 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Italy appealed for US \$150 million for 2001 to help 35 million people in 19 countries affected by famine. The appeal aims to decrease vulnerability, restore stability, link relief with sustainable development, mitigate the consequences of crises and prevent their re-occurrence. The countries to benefit from the appeal are Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Great Lakes Region, Maluku, Indonesia, North Korea, Sierra Leone, Somalia, southeast Europe, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda and West Africa. (*Panafrican News Agency, November 29*)

**UNMEE opens land access route:** On November 28, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) opened the first access route through the frontlines. UNMEE Force Commander Major-General Patrick Cammaert said that the access routes are necessary for the effective deployment of UNMEE's peacekeeping force which will be positioned in the two countries. He stressed that the mechanism has been put in place to facilitate deployment needs and for the time being can only be used by UNMEE international personnel. He pointed out that the next step in the process is the opening of two additional land routes and air routes in the coming weeks. (*UNMEE Press Release, November 28*)

**Ebola outbreak:** Since the first reports of an Ebola outbreak in mid-September in Uganda the disease has claimed 367 lives. The World Health Organization has said that the fever is not likely to be over soon even though the number of cases is starting to fall. Meanwhile, neighboring countries are making efforts to keep the disease at bay. Kenya has screened over 25,000 people at entry points and international airports and reports no cases of Ebola. Sudanese authorities and WHO have also been monitoring the disease in the border districts of north Uganda and have tightened control at border crossings. The Ethiopian Ministry of Health has also reported that it is monitoring travelers from Uganda aboard Ethiopian Airlines flights and at border crossing points. (*AFP, November 6 & 14, October 25; KBC October 24: BBC Monitoring Service*)

**Regional workshop on pastoralism in the Horn of Africa:** A three-day regional workshop on Pastoralism in the Horn of Africa, organized by the Institute of Development Studies and the UN Coordination Unit for Somalia in conjunction with the Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (ORHC) and FAO, was held in northern Kenya from 31 October 2000. Participants included representatives from Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. The main objective of the workshop was to exchange perspectives, ideas and histories and to establish a set of principles for communications between a range of groups associated with the pastoralist issues in the Horn of Africa. Additionally, the workshop aimed to design a programme to support and develop a regional alliance for advocacy, policy dialogue and information, as well as to develop country specific strategies, and community-driven programmes for specific organizations. The meeting recognized the need to lobby regional governments through the Intergovernmental Authority for

Development (IGAD) to include pastoralism as an integral part of their economic system, and accordingly allocate resources for its development. (*African News Services, November 9*)

**12,000 Ethiopians to be repatriated** 12,000 Ethiopian refugees residing in Sudan are to be repatriated. The repatriation, according to UNHCR, is expected to take place before the end of the year. The operation will take place in accordance with the agreement reached between UNHCR and the Ethiopian government. (*UNHCR Press Release, November 20; Walta Information Centre, November 21*)

*IGAD heads of states  
summit held in  
Khartoum.*

**IGAD meeting held in Khartoum:** On November 24, the eighth summit of the East Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was held in Khartoum. IGAD heads of states, including: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda participated in the meeting. The leaders said they have committed themselves to promoting participatory democracy and adapt it to suit local conditions. Regarding developments in the region, the summit welcomed the formation of the interim government in Somalia and the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement by Ethiopia and Eritrea. On the civil war in Sudan they said Sudan should transcend its ethnic and cultural differences and restore peace to the country. The summit also encouraged the establishment of an interstate railroad to link the member states. Experts on economics, agriculture and politics of member states have been meeting in Khartoum since November 18 to prepare for IGAD's ministerial meeting and summit. (*IRIN, November 21; PANA, November 24*)

**War against illicit firearms:** At the end of a meeting held in Nairobi on November 8, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Rwanda drew up an action agenda that aims at combating the firearms threat in the region. The countries agreed to step up the fight against the proliferation of illicit firearms in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. In the meeting, the nine countries agreed to share financial responsibilities in order to sustain the initiative, which includes the control, collection, and seizure of illegal firearms and weapons as well as their destruction. (*Panafrican News Agency, November 9*)

*"The war between  
Ethiopia and Eritrea  
over.." Annan*

**Final settlement to Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in sight:** On November 17, the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan briefed the Security Council in New York on the peacekeeping operations of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and on the general situation in the mission area. Annan said the peacekeeping operation holds great promise for the countries and peoples involved. On developments, Kofi Annan highlighted the agreement reached by both sides to open the first land access route for UNMEE's use, on continuing negotiations regarding air access routes and on the agreement reached to hold the first session of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC). Annan said the mission's military deployment had proceeded on schedule, with the full strength of 4,200 troops, including up to 220 military observers, expected by early next year. However, he expressed "serious concern" about the humanitarian situation in both countries, reporting that more than 300,000 people were internally displaced in Eritrea and another 350,000 in Ethiopia. He further noted that the most critical obstacle to their safe return is the presence of land-mines and unexploded ordnance in areas along the border. At the MCC meeting held in Nairobi on December 2, military delegates from both countries discussed freedom of movement for UNMEE and reached an agreement to provide information on minefields, on a formula for redeployment, rearrangement of forces on both sides and also agreed to provide notification of live fire exercise and troop rotation to UNMEE.

In a bid to turn the June 18 cease-fire into a lasting peace accord, Ethiopian and Eritrean Foreign Ministers held proximity talks from October 23 to October 27 in Algiers under the auspices of the OAU and including

representatives from the European Union, UN, US and the OAU. The talks, however, were reported by both parties to have been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement. Nevertheless in early December newspaper reports began to suggest agreement between the two countries. On December 4, the BBC reported that the government of Eritrea and Ethiopia had indicated their willingness to sign an agreement. Although for Ethiopia, this is subject to the approval of Parliament.

Following a meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin on December 6, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at the start of a three-day visit to the region declared that the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea was over and said "It is a positive story for Africa which ends the year with a story of peace." Spokespersons of the two countries said the formal agreement would be signed on December 12 in Algiers. The agreement is expected to open the way for demarcation of the disputed border, the exchange of prisoners and the release of detainees. (CNN, December 6; BBC on-line, December 4; UNMEE Press Release, December 3 & November 20; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Asmara, October 31; AFP, October 31; IRIN, October 23)

## DJIBOUTI

**Clam restored after protest:** of Djibouti armed police protesting against an unexpected announcement of the transferred of police chief General Ghalid to other functions by Presidential decree surrounded the office and resident of President Ismael Omar Guelleh and occupied radio and TV headquarters for a day, on December 7. Djibouti Interior Minister Abdallah Miguil said order was restored in the evening following half an hour of exchange of gunfire between the police and soldiers, however, no casualties were reported. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan who was on an official visit to neighboring Ethiopia told reporters that he was surprised to learn of the trouble in Djibouti. (AFP, December 7)

**Creation of regional landmines center:** A conference held from November 16 to 18 in Djibouti attended by representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and a delegation from Yemen, tasked Djibouti with creating a regional landmine research and training center to promote the Ottawa Ban Treaty on the elimination of landmines. At the opening of the conference, Djibouti Foreign Minister Ali Abdi Farah said one of the immediate tasks would be to direct assistance to landmine victims in the Horn of Africa. To support landmine activities the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) said the US plans to contribute approximately US\$ 1.1 million. (IRIN, November 21)

**President meets Ethiopian Prime Minister:** Djibouti President Ismael Omar Gelleh talked to Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi about bilateral and regional issues on October 30. The President was going to Zambia to attend the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) when he made the stop over in Addis Ababa. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 31*)

**President meets Sudanese opposition leader:** Djibouti President Ismael Omar Gelleh met Umma party leader Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi on November 26. The President expressed his hope that the return of Mahdi from exile would push forward the peace settlement in Sudan. Mahdi on the other hand revealed his appreciation for efforts made by the President on his home coming and also affirmed his aim of achieving peace and stability in Sudan. (*Sudan TV, Omdurman, November 26: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Service*)

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Eritrea goes on-line with four companies operating as licensed Internet Service Providers.

## ERITREA

**Journalists released:** According to the press freedom watchdog Reporters sans Frontieres, six journalists were released on October 18 from the eight who were arrested for publishing the 'Berlin Manifesto'. The journalists were arrested on October 14 under the pretext that the Berlin Manifesto, a letter written by a group of Eritrean academics and professionals, was written to the Eritrean President and not to the public. The group met with the President on November 25 at his invitation and said that their privacy and that of the President was violated when the letter was published. (*AFP, October 26; The Indian Ocean Newsletter, October 21; Visafric web site, November 25*)

**World Bank extends US \$90 million loan.** The World Bank has approved US\$ 90 million loan to mitigate the effects of war and drought in Eritrea. The Bank said it expects the programme to alleviate consequences of the on-going drought and lay the ground work for long-term recovery and rehabilitation. The loan will be financed by International Development Association (IDA), World Bank's lending arm for the poorest countries. The Bank said that Eritrean government and several bilateral and multilateral developing donors will finance the emergency reconstruction programme with an additional US\$ 197 million. (*Reuters, November 23*)

**Eritrea goes on-line:** Eritrea with the support of USAID, has gone on-line as of November 15 with four companies operating as licensed Internet Service Providers (ISPs), making Eritrea the last country in Africa to after internet access. However, regional internet expert Ben Parker notes that Eritrea had private e-mail service providers operating for at least three years. (*IRIN, November 16; BBC on-line, November 14*)

Ethiopian population projected to reach 129 million by 2030.

ICRC repatriates 843 Ethiopians from Eritrea and 172 Eritreans from Ethiopia via the Meret River.

## ETHIOPIA

**Population projected to reach 129 million:** According to the Central Statistics Authority (CSA), Ethiopia's population will reach 129 million by 2030 from its present level of 63.5 million. A spokesperson for CSA said the current fertility rate, which stands at 5.9 children per woman must be reduced by expanding family planning through information, communication and education. The current population policy envisages to attain a contraceptive prevalence rate of 44 percent by 2015 from 8 percent currently. (*The Daily Monitor, November 28*)

**ICRC assist Meret crossings:** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on November 28 helped repatriated 843 Ethiopians from Eritrea. This followed a similar operation to assist the return of 172 Eritreans from Ethiopia on November 19. Both groups crossed the border via the Meret River north of Rama in Ethiopia. (*The Ethiopian Herald November 29; BBC on-line, November 19*)

**Court sentences former Dergue officials:** The Federal High Court passed jail sentences of 10 years to life imprisonment against 19 former Dergue officials accused of genocide, murder, torture and maiming. The court pointed out that the accused had the right to appeal. (*Radio Ethiopia, 27 October; Quoted by BBC Monitoring Service; Walta Information Center, November 12*)

**Typhoid outbreak:** Due to water contamination typhoid fever has affected more than 600 students at the University of Bahir Dar in northwestern Ethiopia. Medical experts attribute the outbreak to the salmonella group of enterobacteria. (*AFP, November 8*)

**Oil Pipe-line:** Sudan has committed to building an oil pipeline to Ethiopia. This follows Sudan President Omar Al Beshir's pledge in July to facilitate oil

exports in return for the supply of electric power. The Sudanese government has decided to provide Ethiopia with oil by road tanker through land containers as a first phase, after which oil will be transported to Ethiopia through a pipeline. (*IRIN, July 19; Arabic News, November 6*)

**Ethiopia mobilizes against AIDS:** Ethiopian President Negasso Gidada has called for the entire population of Ethiopia to mobilize against AIDS. Chairing the second Assembly of the National HIV/AIDS Prevention Council, on October 27, Negasso stated "the battle we are waging against the pandemic has not yet been properly organized and until we prevail over this devastating enemy, it will inflict substantial human, economic and social losses in the near future". The President noted that the country's weak capacity had prevented it from knowing the number of people affected by HIV/AIDS and the rate at which it is spreading. Health officials estimate that 3 million people are HIV-positive among a population of 62 million. To curb this problem the World Bank and other International financial institutions have recently given Ethiopia US\$ 63 million. (*AFP, October 28; CNN, October 28; Ethiopian Herald, October 17*)

**Embassy opened in Sudan:** Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi laid the foundation stone of the new Ethiopian embassy in Khartoum on October 24. The Prime Minister said cooperation between the two countries will boost their economies and development to the joint advantage of both countries. (*Suna news agency, November 24*)

**Kenyan refugees go home:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that it has resumed the repatriation of more than 5,000 Kenyan refugees from camps in Southern Ethiopia. UNHCR plans to repatriate the entire group of refugees by end of December 2000. A first attempt was made in November 1999, but was unsuccessful due to poor security. On November 10 following the signing of a tripartite agreement between the UNHCR and governments of Kenya and Ethiopia in Nairobi, the refugees once again began a voluntary repatriation process. Currently, out of a total caseload of 5,400 refugees, 1,666 have left Ethiopia for Kenya. (*ENA, November 16*)

## SUDAN

**WFP to continue food assistance:** On November 26, the World Food Programme (WFP) said it intends to provide US\$100 million of food aid to needy Sudanese in 2001. WFP stated that as a result of insecurity resulting in population displacement during the agricultural season, the destruction of assets and looting of livestock, erratic and late rains, drought and floods as well as the high prevalence of disease, the level of food insecurity experienced in 2000 will remain the same in 2001. (*Reuters, November 26*)

**Sudan lodges complaint:** Sudanese Minister for Foreign affairs Dr, Mustafa Ismail has described a visit to South Sudan by Susan Rice, US Assistant Secretary for Africa, without a visa, as an irresponsible act that violates international law and customs. Dr. Mustafa noted that his country will protest to the UN Security Council and until the complaint is received Sudan will continue with the ban it imposed on entry visas to Americans. He also accused the US of supporting the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) and working with Uganda to destabilize Sudan. Meanwhile, Susan Rice said the government of Sudan must stop the bombing of civilians and the practice of slavery and also its support for the Popular Defence Force (PDF) who are harassing the people of southern Sudan. She also stated that her country is not supporting any party but is working for democracy and better future for the people of Sudan. (*AFP, November 20; The Nation, November 27*)

*UNHCR has resumed the repatriation of nearly 5,000 Kenyan refugees from camps in southern Ethiopia.*

*WFP to provide US \$100 million of food aid to needy Sudanese in 2001.*

*Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, claims Susan Rice visit was irresponsible.*

*Sudan Government planes bomb civilians in South.*

**Government accused of bombing civilians:** Sudan government planes reportedly dropped fourteen bombs on November 24 and 25 in Twic country, southern Sudan. A local aid agency, Sudan Production Aid (SUPRAID), said that the bombing demolished part of Panlit missionary school and caused mass panic. The raids may be a prelude to the "fighting season".

According to joint charges by rebels, aid workers and Susan Rice, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Sudanese government planes also bombed Yei (southern Sudan) and killed 18 civilians on November 20. The Sudanese government, however, claimed that the bombing was of military and not civilian targets. Earlier a spokesperson for Norwegian People's Aid, reported that 23 bombs were dropped on October 22 on the southern town of Nimule while aid workers were distributing relief food. The bombing was sharply criticized by the U.S. President Bill Clinton. A statement released from the White House on October 25 said the Sudanese government must allow full and immediate access for humanitarian organizations seeking to provide relief to civilians if Sudan is to demonstrate that it is prepared to act according to international norms and the rule of law. (*Reuters, October 25; IRIN, November 7 & 27; AFP, November 20 & 27*)

**Al-Mahdi back from exile:** After four years of exile in Eritrea and Egypt Sudanese opposition leader and former Prime Minister Sadeq al-Mahdi returned to Khartoum with the approval of Sudan President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on November 21. A few days later Mahdi told a crowd of several thousand people gathered at a mosque, that he will work to bring peace to Sudan and urged Sudanese people to work together. The Umma party, which al-Mahdi heads established an office in Sudan last year after Mahdi made peace with al-Bashir. This followed its breakaway from other opposition groups including the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Regarding his return, Mahdi said he is in Sudan to reactivate his Umma party. The official SUNA news agency reported that al-Bashir has welcomed Mahdi and said he could participate in the political life of the country, in the government or opposition. He also stated that the ruling party and Ummah were close to an agreement. (*Reuters, November 23; BBC on-line, November 24 & 25; IRIN, November 27*)

*Campaign to eradicate polio not successful in Sudan.*

**Polio vaccination campaign interrupted:** UNICEF's representative in Sudan, Thomas Ekvall, told Reuters that due to an absence of total tranquility in Sudan the campaign to eradicate polio has not been successful. He said out of the 5.4 million children targeted in Sudan, about 270,000 would probably not be reached. He pointed out that the civil war has prevented access to all children in Kassala and also in southern Blue Nile state. Ekvall called on both sides, the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), to guarantee total access and to control their various militias. In related news, government bombing during the "period of tranquility" agreed by the government and rebel factions has killed a supervisor for the polio vaccination campaign on October 22. (*Reuters, November 25; IRIN, November 22*)

*Sudan government troops captured the eastern town of Hameshkorib.*

**Eritrea offers mediation:** High level Eritrean delegates have conducted 3-days of talks on reconciliation in Sudan. The independent As-Sahafi Ad-Dawli newspaper, reported that Eritrea proposed a six-point plan to bring about peace between the ruling party of Sudan and the Eritrea-based opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA). According to the newspaper, the points included the establishment of a transitional government; the appointment of John Garang, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army (SPLA) as prime minister and President Omar el-Beshir as head of state; the commitment of the transitional government to observe the country's ethnic and religious diversity, democracy, political and trade unionist freedom, human rights and equal citizenships; replacing the constitution by one drawn with all parties participation; holding a referendum on self-determination in southern Sudan and a nationwide free and fair election by the end of the transitional period

*Violent clashes over land leave four people dead and several injured.*

*WFP report one million people in Kenya and starving as a result of prolonged drought.*

and finally declaring an end to fighting and concluding a comprehensive peace accord. The Sudan Information Minister said the proposal would be incorporated into other bids for peace and reconciliation. (AFP, November 2 & 4)

**Hameshkorib recaptured:** Sudanese spokesman General Mohamed Osman said Sudan government troops successfully re-captured the eastern town of Hameshkorib on October 27. According to the government army statement the town was captured after heavy fighting that resulted in human and material losses on the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) force. An official from NDA on the other hand claimed that they tactically retreated to protect civilians from government shelling. (AFP, October 28)

## KENYA

**Illegal alcohol kills 140:** An illegal alcoholic drink known as chang'aa has killed more than 140 and hospitalized another 400 people. Police say the number is expected to rise as people in Nairobi are still buying and drinking the lethal brew. Police on November 18 said they arrested 58 people in connection with distributing the drink. (IRIN, November 24; BBC on-line, November 19)

**Violent land clashes:** Four people died and several were injured on November 30 when Muslims and dwellers of Mukuru Fuata Nyayo village in South B estate Nairobi engaged in violent clashes. The clashes were initiated by the need to control land; however, it was reported to have turned into a war between Muslim and Christians. The clashes that started with stones and crude weapons left a mosque and two churches burned down. Non-Muslim residents said Muslim leaders were trying to evict them from their land, which they claimed was given to them by an alleged presidential order. (KTN TV, November 30: quoted by BBC Monitoring Service; KBC radio, November 30: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Service)

**Kenya fulfills US conditions:** Kenya has fulfilled conditions set by the US government for participation in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The Act aims at giving African goods free and unlimited access to the US market and it is set to benefit 33 sub-Saharan African countries. A US trade representative said the US government has pumped US \$500 million on the program. ('East Africa Standard' web site, October 28)

**WFP reports starvation:** The UN World Food Program (WFP) reported on October 27 that up to one million people in Kenya are in danger of starving as a result of the prolonged drought. WFP further reported that only 2.9 million of the total 3.9 million Kenyans considered to be drought-stricken are being supplied by the US \$69 million so far received from donors and the Kenyan government. ('East Africa standard' web site, October 28)

## SOMALIA

**Cholera and floods:** 90 people have died of Cholera while 200 more are receiving medical treatment in Southern Somalia. A meeting of the Council of Ministers of Somalia on November 29 was briefed on the Cholera outbreak and also informed that about 80 km of land in Jowhar District had been flooded after the River Shabelle burst its banks. (AFP, November 30; Radio Banaadir, November 2: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Service)

**Egal pardons Arta participants:** Mohamed Egal, President of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, issued decrees that pardon those who took part in the Somali Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti. However, he said if they hold positions at the transitional parliament or government of Somalia they must give up the post immediately. Egal had banned attendance at the Djibouti conference by Somalilanders and hence arrested those who defied him. *(BBC on-line, November 20)*

**Transitional government holds talks with Ethiopia and Kenya:** After talks in Addis Ababa with Somalia interim President Abdiqasim Salad Hasan Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said that though the Arta conference that formed the new government was a major achievement the process would remain incomplete until Somali parties that did not participate at the conference were included. Meanwhile, Somalia Foreign Minister Ismael Mahmoud Hourreh said the transitional government will do everything possible to remove elements that try to use Somali territory as a springboard to threaten security in Ethiopia. A few days later on November 20 Somalia Prime Minister Ali Khalif Galaydh held similar talks with Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi. Moi welcomed the new transitional government of Somalia. In response to a request by the transitional government Moi said his country has no objection to Somalia joining international and regional organizations, or re-establishing an embassy in Nairobi. *(Reuters, November 19 & 17; Ethiopia Herald, November 18; AFP, November 20)*

**Peace accord signed:** A peace accord was signed on October 8 between the Galje'el and Hawadle clans, who have been fighting in southern Somalia. The clans agreed to end fighting and ensure security along the Jowhar-Buulo Berde road, which had been closed. The accord was welcomed by a large gathering, as peace will bring an end to fighting between in Hiiran and Shabeellaha Dhexe regions that has left 60 people dead. (*'Qaran' web site, November 9; quoted by BBC Monitoring Service*)

**Faction leaders call for federalism:** Puntland leader Abdullahi Youssuf Ahmed, Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) commander Hassan Mohamud Nur and General Aden Abdullahi Nur of the Somali Patriotic Front met on October 27 in Garowe and suggested the formation of four regional states to establish a new Federal Republic of Somalia. The regional states are the self-styled independent republic of Somaliland in the northwest, Puntland in the northeast, a third state in central Somalia, and a fourth in the southwest. The faction leaders, who have rejected the legitimacy of President Abdulkassim Salat Hasan's transitional government called for the formation of a technical committee to prepare a new national reconciliation conference for the country. The meeting further called for liberation of southern Somalia's Lower Shabelle and Middle and Lower Juba regions from Habr Gedir control and asked the international community not to give any financial assistance that could be used for violence. *(AFP, October 27)*

**Italian mediation:** The Italian ambassadors to Ethiopia and Somalia, Marcello Recoveri and Francesco Sciortino, held talks on October 25 with Puntland President Abdullahi Youssuf. The talks were aimed at mediating between Yusuf and interim President Abdiqasim Salad Hasan. The Puntland President told the delegates that the government set up in Arta must be renounced and then a new national reconciliation conference for Somalia organized. The delegates also met Mogadishu faction leaders Hussein Aideed, Osman Hasan Ali "Ato", Hussein Mohamed Bod, Mohamed Qanyare Afrah and Mowlid Ma'ane Mahmud to discuss how to reverse their rejection of the transitional government. *(IRIN, November 2; Qaran web site, October 30; Ayaamaha October 26: BBC Monitoring Service)*

**Militiamen to transfer Somali port:** Somali militiamen who have been controlling the Mogdishu international seaport, which has been closed for the

*A peace accord signed between the Galje'el and Hawadle clans.*

*Formation of the new Federal Republic of Somalia proposed comprising four regional states.*



past five years, made an announcement agreeing to transfer control of the port to the interim government of Somalia. The militiamen made the announcement after they were visited by the Minister of Ports and Maritime Transport. (*'Qaran' web site, Mogadishu, October 30: quoted by BBC Monitoring Service*)

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**SOURCES:**

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