

## HORN OF AFRICA The Monthly Review

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This update covers the period October- November 1999

### REGIONAL ISSUES

**Sixth African Regional Conference on Women opens in Addis:** The Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, organised by the African Centre for Women and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was held in Addis Ababa from 22-27 November. The main objective of the meeting was to review Africa's progress in implementing strategies for the empowerment of women agreed in Beijing in 1995. The meeting was being convened 5 years after the adoption of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action which laid down concrete targets for countries to meet. ECA is mandated by the UN General Assembly and African governments to monitor the implementation of regional and global conventions for the advancement of women in Africa. A five-year action plan was adopted at the end of the proceedings to provide appropriate adjustment strategies and redirect efforts towards greater achievement of the Platform for Action. The Plan proposed: co-ordination mechanisms to be established at national, sub-regional and regional levels; strategies for monitoring and evaluating the status of implementation of the Platforms of Action; means of mobilizing resources to enable implementation of the Platforms; and actions to enhance access to and provision of basic goods and services by African women. The conference was attended by 1,500 participants drawn from senior levels of governments, civil society, regional institutions, and bilateral agencies, agencies of the United Nations and multilateral partners. (ECA Press Release, November 15 and 26)

**Inter-Governmental Authority on Development summit in Djibouti:** A summit of Horn of Africa leaders was held in Djibouti on 26 November under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). As well as the host, President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, the summit was attended by Presidents Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Omar al-Beshir of Sudan, as well as Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia. The summit was preceded by a meeting of experts and a meeting of the IGAD Ministerial Council. The agenda under discussion at the summit included issues related to humanitarian and political affairs in the region, the Djibouti initiative on Somalia and the peace process in Sudan. In addition, co-operation in the areas of radio and communications and food security was also discussed. At the summit, the leaders of Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan formally backed Guelleh's proposals for peace in Somalia. According to UN special envoy to the Horn of Africa, Mohamed Sahnoun, who also attended the meeting, Guelleh's plan included "essential and fundamental elements to try to relaunch the search for a solution in Somalia." In the final declaration adopted at the summit the leaders said they backed "a bottom-up approach in which the role of the (Somali) warlords is contained and that of civil society is enhanced." They also called for "an end to the political tourism carried out by Somali warlords and underlined the need for countries not to cooperate with those in Somalia that hinder the peace process." Furthermore, Guelleh, Moi, Meles and Beshir "condemned all those third parties who have chosen to exacerbate the crisis in Somalia, to push Somalia further into the abyss and to create chaos in the sub-region through their co-operation with terrorist groups." In a reference to no-shows by Uganda and Eritrea, the communiqué noted that "recent complications in bilateral relations among some member states have provoked setbacks in regional co-operation." (AFP, November 14 & 27)

**Commonwealth urges WTO to give fairer deal to poor:** Commonwealth leaders have met in Durban South Africa for the 50<sup>th</sup> heads of government Commonwealth Summit. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain opened the Summit. The Commonwealth leaders called for a fairer deal for developing nations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks scheduled to be held in Seattle in early December, promising better government and less corruption. Leaders of the 54 nations of the Commonwealth urged that the next round of global negotiations on trade incorporate a pronounced developmental dimension. The

leaders' declaration, read out at a news conference by Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyaoku, said the body acknowledged the importance of democracy and clean government. "Recognising that good governance and economic progress are directly linked, we affirm our commitment to the pursuit of greater transparency, accountability, the rule of law and the elimination of corruption in all spheres."

The Commonwealth's declarations also adopted an earlier recommendation made by the Commonwealth Business Council to the forthcoming ministerial meeting of WTO. At a meeting preceding the Commonwealth leaders' conference, the Business Council had expressed concern that some industrialised nations threatened by competitive poorer nations could introduce environmental and labour standards as barriers to trade. The Business Council meeting ended with a recommendation that the next round of global negotiations on trade should not involve environmental and labour standards. In their declaration, the leaders of the Commonwealth recommended that these two criteria should not be used as a new form of trade barrier against developing countries. WTO Director General, Mike Moore warned that the launch of the trade negotiations round next year was still being discussed with negotiators still split over the agenda for the Seattle meeting. One of the issues which remains an obstacle is agriculture, particularly the system of farm subsidies in place in the European Union and other countries like Japan. (*Ethiopian Herald, 16 November*)

***Egypt and Libya sign accord on Sudan:*** Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa and Umar al-Muntasir, the Libyan secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation, signed minutes of a meeting of the Joint Egyptian-Libyan Committee for National Accord in Sudan. The Libyan diplomat attended the meeting during a two-day visit to Egypt. Umar al-Muntasir and Amr Musa co-chaired the meeting at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry of the Joint Egyptian-Libyan committee for National Accord in Somalia. Speaking to reporters after a two hour private meeting with Muntasir, Musa said that the two sides were discussing future moves and working out an agenda for action. He added that the two sides were determined to continue their peace initiative for Sudan and plan to co-ordinate with the IGAD initiative. Asked about a possible merger of the IGAD and Libyan/Egyptian initiatives, Muntasir said that there would be no merger but co-ordination, adding that some of the IGAD members support the Egyptian-Libyan initiative. Asked on future steps related to the Egyptian-Libyan initiative, Muntasir said that the next step is to exert more efforts to implement this initiative, particularly since the meetings between the Sudanese government and opposition were held as previously agreed. He noted that Egypt and Libya were waiting for the IGAD summit. (*AFP, November 12*)

***Co-operation agreement on the Nile:*** Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia have met to discuss a draft co-operation strategy concerning projects exploiting the waters of the Nile Basin. The discussions took place at a tripartite meeting of water resource ministers from the three countries under the auspices of the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Programme (ENSAP). The talks, held in Khartoum from November 18-19, were preceded by technical committee sessions held from November 15-17 where the draft strategy paper was developed. A joint communiqué issued at the end of the meetings by the three countries' water resources ministers said they had agreed to take note of the draft document setting out the terms of strategic co-operation in Nile water projects. The draft strategy calls for equitable use of the waters in irrigation and electric power projects as well as those aimed at the prevention of soil erosion, flooding and pollution. The three ministers agreed to hold their next meeting in late January 2000 in Cairo. Earlier, according to an AFP report, the Government of Sudan warned other Nile Basin states against foreign interference and particularly against what it sees as Israeli ambitions regarding the Nile river's waters. (*AFP, November 6 & 19; Other sources, November 19*)

## **ETHIOPIA**

***New railway project:*** A team of senior South African professionals have started a feasibility study on the construction of a 600 kms long railway from Djibouti to Awash-Mille in Afar Region. The railway project would cost an estimated US \$400 million, according to the team leader. The feasibility study is being conducted in accordance with an agreement signed between the governments of Ethiopia and South Africa. The construction work is scheduled to be completed in a period of three years. The team will also carry out a study on the possibility of repairing the 700 km long existing Ethiopia-Djibouti

railway according to Tesfaye Habiso, management and training head at the Ministry of Transport and Communications. (ENA; *The Monitor*, November 25)

**Two officials of former government sentenced to death:** The Ethiopian high court has sentenced Lieutenant Kebede Kebret and Lieutenant Getachew Tekeba to death for their involvement in acts of genocide during the “Red Terror” campaign of dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. Both former officials in the Mengistu regime were tried *in absentia* and the court has ordered that they be tracked down and presented to the court for the sentence to be carried out. Tekeba, the first Red Terror militant to be sentenced to death, was charged with torturing and killing five people for being members of the EDU (Ethiopian Democratic Union) and the EPRP (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party). The court heard that between 1978 and 1979 he had also tortured two other people in his capacity as the representative of the Dergue in Lasta District of the former Welo Province. Kebede Kebret, who was the administrator of Yiju District, also in Welo, ordered the death of 17 people whom he accused of being members of the opposition. He was present for the execution of five of the 17 victims and all had been subjected to beatings and torture in prison. The bodies of the victims were thrown in a mass grave and relatives of the deceased were forbidden to mourn for their dead. According to the constitution the two death sentences will take effect after it has been presented to the head of state for his assent. Two thousand former officials of the Mengistu regime are still in prison awaiting hearings in trials that began almost five years ago. (AFP, November 17; *Ethiopian Herald*, 23 November)

**Civilian landmine casualty rates reported in Ethiopian press:** According to the Culture and Tourism Bureau of Tigray State, landmines have caused the death of 36 people and injured 72 others during their attempts to return home to Badme and surrounding areas. The Bureau told the Walta Information Center that many of the landmine victims had been physically handicapped and 17 people remain unaccounted for. A large number of people displaced from the Badme area have postponed their return for fear of landmines. The Bureau also reported that a total of 276 domestic animals as well as over 200 wild animals had perished by mine explosions over the past months. The Government of Ethiopia has estimated that 100,000 mines were laid in Badme. (*Xinhua*, November 13)

## ERITREA

**Eritrea boycotts IGAD Summit Meeting:** Eritrea announced it would boycott the IGAD summit meeting scheduled for November 26, unless the venue, in Djibouti, was changed. Eritrean Presidential advisor Yemane Gebremeskel told Reuters that Eritrea had been invited to the IGAD meeting and that Djibouti had also expressed a desire to normalise relations. But he said relations should have been restored before the invitation to the meeting was presented. “We are very committed to IGAD, but when the Djiboutians have just been slandering us... and they have broken off diplomatic relations, we cannot attend at the highest level, “ said Yemane. (Reuters, November 19)

**France to finance water supply project in Asmara:** France is to finance a water supply project in the Eritrean capital, Asmara. The agreement, for the 4.27 million Euro project, (US \$4.46 million), was signed between the Eritrean International Co-operation Minister Berhane Abrehe and the French Development Agency’s Regional Director, Jean-Pierre Lemelle. The grant is France’s largest to Eritrea since it gained independence from Ethiopia in 1991. The project aims to refurbish pumping stations, improve water tanks and reconstruct distribution networks in the city. (AFP, November 16)

**ACP-EU delegation in Asmara:** Following a stay in Ethiopia a delegation from the African, Caribbean and Pacific and EU (ACP-EU), led by vice-president John Alexander Corrie was in Asmara for a three day visit and held talks with members of Eritrean parliament, various government officials and Eritreans expelled from Ethiopia. The mission also visited deportee’s camps. The mayor of Asmara, Amdemikael Kahsay and the chairperson of the National Union of Eritrean Women, Leule Gebreab, welcomed the delegation. In an interview with the Eritrean News Agency, Corrie said that the ACP-EU resolution, passed at the body’s 29<sup>th</sup> meeting held in the Bahamas in late October was passed in a democratic process. He said that reports of the ACP-EU asking for an apology for the statement were incorrect stating that the resolution could not be changed and that the delegation has no reason to ask for an

apology. The resolution called on Ethiopia to implement the OAU peace package by accepting the technical modalities and to respect human rights regarding Eritreans residing in Ethiopia. During their meeting with President Isayas Afewerki the delegation was urged to make efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. (*BBC Monitoring, Voice of Eritrea, 12 November*)

## DJIBOUTI

***Djibouti presidential envoy in Cairo:*** A personal envoy of the Djibouti President Ismael Omar Guelleh was in Cairo at the end of October to meet with Egyptian Foreign Minister for discussions on Guelleh's peace initiative for Somalia. Presidential envoy, Fahmi Ahmed Hajj, told reporters after the meeting that the Djibouti plan, which proposes holding a reconciliation conference and prosecuting warlords, aims to complement Egyptian efforts to resolve the situation. The Djibouti proposal for Somalia was first considered by the Standing Committee on Somali, (comprising IGAD member states and donor countries), during a one-day meeting held in Addis Ababa in early October. At the time, the meeting referred the Djibouti proposal for consideration at the November IGAD summit. During his state visit to Ethiopia (see item below) Guelleh told reporters, "I'm happy that the initiative has received the support of the international community. We hope to begin implementing it through the IGAD summit soon." The new proposal by Djibouti "stresses the need" to involve Somalia's civil society-clan elders, religious leaders, the business community, NGOs and women and youth groups in peace and reconciliation efforts. (*AFP, October 30; PANA, November 3 & 4*)

***President Guelleh pays official visit to Ethiopia:*** Djibouti President Ismael Omar Guelleh arrived in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa on November 1 at the start of a three day official visit. Guelleh met with President Negasso Gidada and later with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi where he discussed bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries. During his stay, Guelleh signed accords covering the use of the Djibouti port by landlocked Ethiopia, as well as on trade, customs, investment and transport. On the third day of his visit, Guelleh traveled to the north of the country for talks with the authorities in Tigray region and became the first African leader to visit the mosque of Negash, known as the "second Mecca." Ahead of the visit, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said that the two countries should work towards creation of a common market, facilitate trade networks and promote the movement of tourists and investors. Ethiopia, which has been at war with Eritrea since 1998, has resorted to transshipping the bulk of its imports and exports through Djibouti port instead of through Eritrea's Assab and Massawa facilities. (*AFP, November 1 & 4*)

***WFP launches proposal to improve Djibouti Port:*** WFP has launched a special operations proposal for infrastructural improvements at Djibouti Port. Specifically, the project aims to increase access to and utilisation of Berth 13 in Djibouti Port and improve the storage and weighing facilities of the port. The overall goal of the proposed operation is to improve the port's operational efficiency to facilitate WFP's emergency operations in Ethiopia and reduce WFP's overland and external transport costs related to its Ethiopia operations. The proposals, presented to donors in early November aim to sustain Djibouti port's current port handling capacity and improve the ability to cope with the expected increased relief tonnage during 2000. The operation will also improve the port's ability to control and account for food and non-food movements. The operation includes a plan to provide the port with four truck weigh-bridges and additional storage in the form of a semi-permanent storage facility, of the Rubb-Hall type, with a capacity of 5,000 MT. The provision of infrastructure and equipment support to the port is expected to take 4-6 months and will cost an estimated US \$2,585,153. (*WFP, Emergency Report No. 47, November 26*)

## SUDAN

***Sudanese President pays official visit to Ethiopia:*** President Omar al-Beshir of Sudan paid a working visit to Ethiopia from 18 to 19 November which culminated in a joint communiqué signed by Prime Minister Meles and President Beshir. The president, accompanied by high-ranking government officials, held extensive discussions on bilateral and regional issues of common interest. The joint communiqué said that the two leaders exchanged views on ways and means of reactivating the Ethiopia-Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission and agreed to take the necessary steps to convene the next meeting of the

Commission in February 2000. The two leaders also agreed on exchange visits to be held between the regional presidents/governments of the regions bordering the two countries. On the conflict situation in the Horn of Africa, the two leaders expressed a common view that the problems must be resolved on the bases of charter principles of the OAU and the UN. The two leaders also agreed that the process of the revitalisation of the sub-regional organisation, IGAD should be pursued vigorously by member states. Beshir later described his two-day visit to Ethiopia as successful, saying that Sudanese-Ethiopian relations "have now fully returned to normal." (*AFP, November 20; Office of the Ethiopian Government Spokesperson, November 19*)

**Opposition leader to propose new peace plan:** Sadiq-al-Mahdi, leader of the opposition Umma Party, has revealed that his party has drawn up a new plan to be put to the NDA leadership meeting to be held in Kampala in December. The new proposal aims to eliminate the inconsistencies between the two peace initiatives for Sudan, the IGAD initiative and the joint Egyptian-Libyan initiative. Mahdi pointed out that there are many plans being put forward to avoid fragmentation and disagreement, including the US plan to expand the IGAD with the Sudanese opposition taking part collectively in a unified delegation under the leadership of the SPLM, and Egypt to be given observer status in IGAD. Mahdi said that the Umma Party believes this US plan to be inappropriate, prompting his party to draw up a new plan. (*BBC Monitoring; Al Sarq al-Awsat, November 22*)

**President Beshir meets opposition leader Sadiq al-Mahdi:** After his Ethiopia visit, President Beshir told reporters that top opposition leader Sadiq-al-Mahdi failed to show up for a landmark meeting that was planned to take place in Addis Ababa on November 19. The meeting, which Beshir said Mahdi had proposed, would have been their first since 1989 when the former Prime Minister Mahdi's government was overthrown by a coup. Later in the month, on the fringes of the IGAD heads of states summit held in Djibouti, President Beshir and al-Mahdi finally did meet informally in the residence of President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti. According to news reports Beshir and Mahdi, who heads the opposition Umma Party, greeted each other warmly before their two-hour meeting. Mahdi had reportedly been deterred from holding the earlier meeting with Beshir by other members of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), some of whom have accused Mahdi of being obsessed with the power he once enjoyed as prime minister. But NDA secretary general Mubarak al-Fadl was with Mahdi at the Djibouti meeting. According to an Umma Party spokesman in Khartoum, the talks were not aimed at a bilateral settlement between Mahdi's Umma Party and the ruling Islamists. The Umma Party is part of an alliance of northern movements and parties which had been in coalition before the military coup and of rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which has been fighting since 1983. "The Umma Party is committed to the resolutions of the NDA," senior party official Adam Mussa Madibbo told *Elsharee Elsyasi* daily. (*AFP, November 25 & 26*)

**South Sudan Defence Force claims 25 officers killed during cease-fire talks:** The spokesman of the United Democratic Salvation Front (USDF), the political wing of the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF), has claimed that 25 officers in the SSDF were killed by its rival pro-government faction, United Army, during talks about prospects for a cease-fire between the two. The spokesman, Makuac Teny Youk said that the SSDF had accepted an invitation by the government army's local commander and the United Army to discuss a cease-fire between the two rival factions in Bentiu town, the capital of southern Sudan's Unity State on October 31. According to the spokesman, twenty-officers, four NCO's and SSDF Unit Commander Angelo Raui travelled to Bentiu and met with United Army Major General Pulino Mateb, who is also a senior officer in the government army. Following these talks the SSDF officers were invited by a regional government officer to his office in Bentiu garrison for further talks, Youk said, where the SSDF commander Angelo Raui was informed by the commanding officer that Mateb had issued a warrant for his arrest. The USDF spokesman alleges the "massacre" started with Raui's protest after which he was immediately shot and that the other SSDF men were shot shortly afterwards "in collaboration with the government army". (*AFP, November 3*)

**UNICEF children's conference opens:** A UNICEF sponsored conference to seek solutions to the problems facing children in war-torn southern Sudan opened in Nairobi on 14 November. The conference was intended to come up with a "common agenda" driven by children's point of view, which would then be incorporated into UNICEF's "plan of action" for the children of southern Sudan. The seven-day conference entitled "Children of Sudan future Search Conference" was designed to allow a group of children from the war-torn region share experiences and express their views on their condition. The youngsters then took part in an adult's conference, attended by intellectuals, medical experts, education

experts, chiefs, indigenous NGOs and representatives of women and youth groups. Some 50 children were expected to take part in the conference. (AFP, November 13 & 14)

**EU delegation visits Khartoum:** A EU delegation paid an official two day visit to Sudan and held talks with foreign ministry officials in Khartoum and separate meetings with foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, Junior Foreign Minister Gebriel Rorec, Manpower Minister Agnis Lukudu and Deputy National Assembly Speaker Abdel Aziz Shiddu. Shiddu told reporters that Khartoum had agreed to a proposal by the EU delegation for formation of a Sudanese-European committee, to ensure a continued dialogue that would not await visiting delegations. Shiddu said Khartoum had proposed that a fact-finding mission representing the EU and African, Pacific and Caribbean (ACP) groups visit Sudan to “help enhance the dialogue and promote the Sudanese-European relations” In a press statements following his meeting with the EU delegation, Shiddu highlighted that Sudanese-EU dialogue would boost the Sudanese demand for the restoration of Sudan’s dues within the Lome conventions, after the reasons behind the freeze of these rights have been eliminated.

Sudan and the European Union have agreed on an agenda for broad talks, renewed by the visiting delegation and to be pursued by EU member states’ heads of mission in Khartoum, the foreign ministry said. In a statement, the ministry said that talks would be held every three months on an agenda including Sudan’s internal peace process, human rights, democratisation, terrorism and Sudan’s relations with neighbouring countries. Delegation chief Tuunanen Heikki of Finland, which currently chairs the EU, told reporters that the EU had decided to resume a dialogue suspended in 1996 because the EU had “noticed signs of improvement” in the situation in Sudan. He said financial and economic relations between Sudan and the EU would be addressed after the political issues were settled. Heikki said that the EU would monitor issues of democracy, human rights and the political and civil freedoms of expression and assembly, as well as religious tolerance in Sudan. (BBC Monitoring, 12 November: Sudan TV, 11 November; AFP, 12 November; SUNA News Agency, 12 November)

## SOMALIA

**Power of Islamic courts and Sharia militia increasing:** After collapsing two years ago, the Islamic Court system was re-established in Somalia marked by an inauguration ceremony for the restoration of Sharia Law held in North Moqdishu in September. By the end of October, the new Islamic Court’s progress in the establishment of its own militia was being reported in various Somali daily newspapers. According to the papers, on 26 October, 140 recruits from the Southern Moqdishu Islamic courts completed their one-month training. Officials of the Islamic courts of Southern Moqdishu attended the graduation ceremony of the first graduates who reportedly completed their training in Ceel-Cirfiid. Shortly after, the courts began taking action against increasing insecurity in Somalia.

The Islamic Court’s operations against banditry began on October 28 when at least nine people were killed and 11 wounded during the Islamic militia’s attack on bandits operating on a road linking Moqdishu and the southern port town of Merca. AFP quoted an official of the Moqdishu Islamic Court as saying that the gunmen had ignored an ultimatum to clear their checkpoints. “We are determined to clear the roads from the enemy of Islam who are robbing people of their belongings” he said. At least seven roadblocks manned by heavily armed men and a dozen small checkpoints were also dismantled reports said. On October 29, according to another AFP report, the Islamic court militias proceeded to seize the port facilities, police headquarters and prison at Merca vowing to rid the area of bandits and freelance gunmen.

Following the take over of Merca, Islamic courts tried and convicted 149 men charged with banditry. The men were convicted of armed robbery, extortion and illegally occupying other people’s farms and houses and sentences ranged from two months to two years. The convicts had no lawyers to defend them. A spokesman for the court said that their guilt had been proved “beyond reasonable doubt according to Sharia law.” The spokesman also said that several of the convicts would be caned for “un-Islamic behaviour”. Some of the convicted are believed to be supporters of Hussein Aidid, but many of those convicted come from the large number of freelance gunmen who engage in acts of banditry along southern Somalia’s roads.

According to the daily newspaper, *Xog-Ogaal*, Islamic court officials in Merca held talks with a representative of the UN. During the meetings, the two sides agreed that UN aid agencies could resume their operations in Merca as of November 11. According to AFP, this was also the day when Islamic court militiamen withdrew from Merca port, handing it back to a committee of businessmen to run it. The Sharia militia who were running the port since October 29, had levied only one dollar on every sack of commodities, a move welcomed by importers. The money was used towards the upkeep of the members of Islamic forces maintaining security at the port. A court official Sheikh Omer Moalin Nur said the militiamen were also to return a police station in the town to the local authorities. Traders, who are strongly backing the Islamic forces, had deployed their own troops to Merca in early November with plans to reopen the port. The first commercial ships to dock at Merca town since the beginning of the monsoon period are vessels chartered by Somali traders, bringing in commodities such as rice, wheat, flour, spaghetti and other consumer goods.

Merca is a port town and an important gateway for relief aid in Southern Somalia and had of late degenerated into anarchy and lawlessness. Commercial vessels had stopped calling at the town because of the increased security. Islamists forces and Sharia law had previously governed Merca for two years before the US led intervention troops arrived in Somalia in December 1992. Two years ago, dozens of people were killed when militiamen of the Islamic court fought with USC/SSA forces in Moqdishu. The court closed down after the violence. (AFP, October 21, 26 & 28, November 1, 11, 13 & 15; *Ayamaha*, October 30; *Xog Ogaal*, November 1 & 13)

**MSF suspends activities:** The humanitarian medical charity Medecin sans Frontières (Belgium) is suspending its operations at a hospital in southern Somalia for security reasons. In a statement, the NGO said that the responsibility for the running of the hospital in the southern port city of Kismayo was being handed over to the regions' healthcare board on November 30. The statement referred to MSF's evacuation of expatriate staff on June 12 and stressed that the announcement did not mean that the project would be ending. "Due to the prolonged absence of the expatriate project team from Kismayo MSF can no longer fulfil its fundamental principle of guaranteeing the quality of healthcare through direct supervision and we, therefore, regret to suspend our activities temporarily in Kismayo hospital" the MSF statement said.

The organisation also said that it would stay in close contact with Kismayo and the hospital from Nairobi in neighbouring Kenya in the hopes of being able to resume some of its basic healthcare activities as soon as the situation improved. It said that that from November 30 the hospital which serves the population in and around the city would receive a monthly emergency supply of drugs and medical material to enable it to provide basic emergency healthcare. Earlier in November MSF Holland had temporarily withdrawn its staff from the central Somali town of Galkayo following an armed robbery at its mission. Three armed men forced their way into the MSF centre and forced the project co-ordinator at gunpoint to open the safe and escaped with an unknown amount of money. (AFP, November 14 & 20)

**Aidid disarms Ethiopian rebels:** Militiamen loyal to Somali warlord Hussein Aidid have reportedly disarmed more than 100 Ethiopian rebels of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) based in Southern Somalia. The move against the OLF was said to be aimed at improving relations between Aidid's faction and Ethiopia, which have been strained because of Aidid's earlier support for the rebel group. Aidid, the self-styled "president" of Somalia had accused Ethiopia of arming groups opposed to his leadership, a reference to the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), among others. "Somali factions are honouring an understanding reached with the Ethiopian government in October," Aidid's top ally Issa Mohamed Siad said after his fighters disarmed 108 members of the OLF. The operation was carried out in the presence of the Libyan and Egyptian envoys in Somalia, Ma'atuq al-Zubeyd and Mohamed Magdi al-Sayid. Siad said that members of the OLF's "executive committee" in Moqdishu had also been ordered to leave all areas in Somalia controlled by Aidid's Somalia National Alliance (SNA).

Aidid, however, was later accused of faking the disarmament. The Digil Salvation Army (DSA) and the Southern Somalia National Movement (SSNM) said refugees had been asked by Aidid's faction to pose as rebels from the OLF and take part in a disarmament ceremony in Moqdishu. "Thousands of Ethiopian rebels who were armed and trained by Aidid with the help of Eritrea are still present in camps in Somalia. Those disarmed were simply refugees," said SSNM spokesman Muhyadin Haji Mohamed.

DSA spokesman Asad Abdi Mohamed said Aidid's faction was "hosting genuine OLF members and expelling poor street beggars". (AFP, November 28 & 30)

**Puntland parliament in second session:** The Puntland parliament, in its second session which began on November 1, has discussed the current situation in the north-eastern regional state of Somalia. The theme of the parliamentary discussion was "Tell the Truth", with MPs evaluating themselves and highlighting serious issues they felt had been managed unsatisfactorily by the regional administration. Many MPs expressed dissatisfaction with how the affairs of the region were being run and legislative changes and amendments to administrative matters were proposed. Also the MPs discussed the year 2000 budget, current media regulations which most MPs described as suppressive, illegal fishing activities in Puntland waters and how to combat them. The leader of the "Puntland Autonomous Region", Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, has submitted a legislative proposal to the parliament that would outlaw the carrying and possession of weapons and military ordnance except by police and the administration's Special Forces. He is also proposing that public display of firearms should be illegal. (BBC Monitoring, 2 November: Qaran, November 2; Xog Ogaal, November 2)

**Anti-secessionist protest during Egal's tour of Boroma town:** The president of Somaliland, Muhammad Ibrahim Egal, and his delegation who were on an official visit to Boroma town were greeted with demonstrations and protests by a huge group of local residents led by Reqiyah Aw Al, a former Somaliland presidential candidate. The group was reportedly opposed to the secession of Somaliland from the rest of Somalia. According to a report published in the Moqdishu daily newspaper, *Ayaamaha*, the group shouted the slogans: "We do not want to see Somalia divided," and "We support the Somali faction leaders reconciliation conference". The paper said that this is the first time in the past few years that a group opposed to the secession of Somaliland publicly declared its stand and launched a demonstration. Egal, who addressed a rally in the town, is reported to have said: "It is impossible for Somaliland to reunite with the rest of Somalia."

Several political leaders from Somaliland, including Ad al-Rahman Ahmad Ali (Tur), Muhammad Farah Abdullahi, General Jama Muhammad Ghalib and Huseyn Elabeh Faniyeh issued a joint press statement on President Egal's visit to Boroma town, expressing their strong support for the people who protested against President Egal and his delegation, reported the *Qaran* newspaper in Moqdishu. The press statement said "We congratulate the residents of Boroma town, the capital of Awdal Region on their heroic demonstration against Egal and their protest against the secession of Somaliland." They further said in the press statement that the Boroma demonstration against Egal and his delegation expressed the true position of the majority of the people in Somaliland. (BBC Monitoring, November 16 & 17: *Ayaama*, November 16; *Quaran*, November 17)

**European Union funds road rehabilitation project in Somaliland:** The European Commission and the Danish government have signed a contract with East-West contractors of Somaliland to start repairs of bridges and culverts along the Hargeisa-Dila road. The contract signed on November 7 is the first of five projects to be conducted over two years that will involve the rehabilitation of the most damaged sections of the main road network along the route Dila-Hargeisa-Berbera-Bur'oo. A spokesperson for the EU told the Somaliland paper *The Republican*, that it was the Somaliland authorities' willingness to invest in road maintenance that made funds for the programme available. "Their efforts to maintain this vital infrastructure, by establishing a road fund and a road authority has given them access to funds from the international community" he said. The road works are co-funded by the EC and the Danish government under supervision of Louis-Berger SA. The first phase of the project will cost about US \$1 million, according to an EC source. (BBC Monitoring, November 10: *The Republican*, November 6)

## KENYA

**UNHCR clarifies position on repatriation of Kenyans from Ethiopia:** The Government of Kenya has asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to suspend the return of 4,700 Kenyan refugees from Ethiopia. The refugee agency said the repatriation had been called off due to security concerns and clan fighting in the refugees area of return. Earlier the Ethiopian government had agreed to return some 550 Kenyan refugees from Isiolo in Kenya's North Eastern Province to refugee sites in

Moyale along its border with Kenya. The spokesperson for UNHCR said “the government did send in Kenyan officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, who went in and met with the refugees and verified that these indeed were Kenyans. I think that the government is saying to us that the timing perhaps could be withheld for a short time.” The spokesperson said that the situation of the first group of 550 refugees who were turned back from Moyale remained critical since the agency does not have further supplies of food and water for the refugees. UNHCR staff who had been deployed to Moyale to carry out the operation have been recalled. (*BBC Monitoring, November 4; KTN TV, November 3; AP, November 4; Xinhua, November 4*)

**Preparation for IMF aid resumption talks:** As part of Kenya’s continuing efforts to persuade the IMF board to resume talks on a new aid package a three day workshop was held at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies at the end of October. The workshop was to formulate the first phase of a three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework outlining priorities for allocation of public resources. More than 50 top civil servants and permanent secretaries met to draft an outline of measures for more effective implementation of policies and expenditure programmes. The document will form the basis of the new three-year policy framework paper, which is being worked on in readiness for a planned IMF mission in December. Senior World Bank officials, including Ken Ohashi, head of the Kenya desk in Washington and his expected successor Melanie Millet, as well as senior officials from Kenya’s World Bank office also attended the meeting. The IMF board was due to meet on November 28 and the Kenyan Treasury is planning an IMF mission in December. (*BBC Monitoring, November 1; The East African, November 1*)

**Government calls emergency meeting on famine threat:** All of Kenya’s eight Provincial Commissioners were summoned to attend a crisis meeting at the Office of the President to discuss strategies for coping with drought and food shortages in Kenya. The emergency meeting held in Nairobi at the end of October discussed famine conditions reported in 18 districts of Kenya. Office of the President Permanent Secretary Zacharia Cheruiyot named the worst affected districts as Mandera, Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, West Pokot, and Turkana, which are all in the north-western and northern Kenya. He stressed that in Turkana District the situation was particularly bad. Cheruiyot said that food was being sent to the affected areas and 64,000 bags of maize had been distributed through national, district and community co-ordinating committees responsible for the distribution of livestock food and health facilities. A further 258,000 bags of maize and beans is also available for further distributions. Meanwhile, the Kenyan Government has set aside a budget of 300 million shillings (about US \$4 million) for famine relief and Cheruiyot is quoted as saying that out of the allocations, 240 million shillings will be used to buy food while the rest will be used for logistics. Cheruiyot said that his government requires one million bags (@ 90 kgs per bag, approximately 90,000 MT) of maize for the next six months to feed the affected people. (*Ethiopian Herald, October 28; The Standard, October 27; BBC Monitoring October 27*)

**Kenya to chair the Africa group at the WTO summit in Seattle:** Kenya is the currently the chair of the Africa group which will represent African views at the World Trade Organisation meeting to be held in Seattle, USA. During the conference, the developing world hopes to secure renegotiations of the WTO articles on agriculture and intellectual property. According to Kenya’s minister for tourism, trade and industry, Nicholas Biwott, Kenya wants industrialised countries to remove subsidies on their agricultural exports to Africa. Speaking at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre where he opened a conference on the rejuvenation of professionalism in Kenya, the President asked professionals to help the country overcome the challenges of unfair competition posed by liberalisation and globalisation, including the dumping of highly subsidised goods. He invited the participants to give suggestions and make contributions to the effort of addressing these problems with a view to instituting remedial measures. He urged professionals and scholars to pursue knowledge and research in order to ensure that Kenya did not “become a supermarket for the innovations and products that others have made.” (*Newsweek, The Daily Nation,* )

## UGANDA

**Uganda, Rwandan presidents and military chiefs meet in Uganda:** Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and his Rwandan counterpart, Pasteur Bizimungu met for talks in the western Ugandan town of Kabale on November 8. Vice President and Defense Minister Paul Kagame, minister in the presidency

Patrick Mazimhaka and four other cabinet ministers, accompanied Bizimungu. Uganda's Foreign Minister Eric Kategaya, Defense Minister Steven Kavuma and Minister of State for Regional Cooperation Amama Mbabazi also attended the talks. The talks centered on the relationship between the two countries, whose alliance suffered a major blow in August of this year when troops from both battled in the northeast DRC town of Kisangani. Museveni and Bizimungu concluded their discussions with a joint communiqué that said they "agreed on the way forward in resolving outstanding problems" and on "strengthening our alliance" The communiqué said the two had "reaffirmed their full support of the Lusaka agreement for cease-fire in the DRC and exchanged views on how to support its timely implementation. (AFP, November 6 & 8)

**Lusaka Accords Joint Military Commission meets:** Parties to the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo held the first full meeting of the Joint Military Commission in Uganda. The JMC was set up under a cease-fire accord finalized late August in Lusaka. The accord's signatories are the government of DRC President Laurent Kabila, his allies, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, DRC rebel groups the Congolese Rally for Democracy and the Congo Liberation Movements allied to Uganda and Rwanda. The JMC was convened in Kampala under the chairmanship of Algerian, General Allali. The JMC has held several preliminary sessions in Lusaka but formal talks were delayed by a question of rebel representations. The role of the commission is to monitor the cease-fire with the assistance of observers from the United Nations and the OAU until a full UN-backed peacekeeping force is deployed. A UN representative to the meeting told participants that the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was "very seriously concerned" at the lack of progress in the Lusaka initiative. He added that Annan hoped to shortly deploy 500 observers in the DRC and nearby countries. Representatives of the parties gave "written declarations of security guarantees for United Nations personnel and property", according to a statement released after the talks. (AFP, October 10, 11 & 12)

**Ugandan journalists march in protest of alleged state persecution:** Some 100 journalists demonstrated in the Uganda capital Kampala on November 12 protesting alleged harassment and violation of media freedom by the state. According to eyewitness reports journalists from the independent and official media shouted "We want freedom, no draconian laws" as they marched towards parliament where they presented a petition to Uganda's parliamentary speaker Francis Ayume. The petition called for the repeal of the sedition law and the respect of freedom of expression. The demonstration was a reaction to the questioning by police of Wafula Ogutu, editor-in-chief of the independent *Monitor* newspaper, deputy chief reporter, James Tumumise and stringer Sira Sbwama who were asked about a newspaper article published early in November. The article, published in the *Monitor* on November 2 reproduced a claim made in a foreign radio broadcast suggesting that Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi was in Uganda. The police told the journalists that they would later be charged with publishing false information. Wafula Ogutu is already being tried along with his deputy Charles Onyango-Obbo and news editor David Ouma for publishing false news and sedition. That trial stems from the publication by the *Monitor* on May 13 of a picture showing uniformed men forcibly shaving the pubic hair of a woman. The pictures caption said the photo had been taken in Gulu army barracks in northern Uganda. On November 9, James Nangwala, the lawyer defending the three journalists was shot and wounded by unidentified gunmen outside his home in Kampala. Convictions for publishing false news and for sedition carry maximum sentences of two and five years respectively. (AFP, November 9, 10, 11 & 12)

**Former Ugandan envoy launches new political party:** Uganda's former envoy to Zambia and Zimbabwe, Edward Oumu-Okiror, has announced the launch of a new political party to challenge President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's National Resistance Movement. In an interview with the *Monitor* newspaper, Okiror said that Ugandan opposition and community leaders in London had given overwhelming support to his New Order Democratic Party. Okiror said he had opened a NOD office in London but declined to name the office bearers, saying it was "premature". According to Okiror, NOD would never use violence to take power. Okiror said he had renounced his membership of the Uganda People's congress and that he had founded the NOD in 1991 when 35 Ugandans signed a petition asking him to lead them in an alternative political arrangement. He said NOD would join other democratic forces to boycott the 2000 referendum. (*The Monitor*, November 11)

**Ugandan army commander killed in eastern DRC:** The commander of the UPDF (Uganda People's Defence Forces) in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Major Rueben Ikondore, has been killed.

Major Ikondore was killed by Mayi Mayi militiamen in Beni, eastern Congo together with his two escorts. A statement from the army chief of staff and overall commander of the UPDF forces in Congo, Brigadier James Kazini, says the major had flown from Bunia to Beni yesterday where he spent the night in town outside UPDF defences. The Mayi Mayi are reported to include elements of the Allied Democratic Forces rebels and ex-Mobutu soldiers. Brigadier Kazini said the motive for the Mayi Mayi attack is not clear. In a UPDF counterattack, the statement says, at least fifty Mayi Mayi were killed and many others were captured. The army chief of staff noted that the activities of the Mayi Mayi started in early November and more information on the motive of the attack is being processed from the captured fighters. The situation in Beni is reportedly now stable. *(BBC Monitoring, November 14: Radio Uganda, November 14)*

## 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.

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