

A Week in the Horn. 25/12/2015

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The UN Security Council issued a press statement voicing “deep concern at the continuing escalation of violence in Burundi and noted the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council decision to deploy an African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU). The Peace and Security Council invoked the clause in the AU Constitutive Act, Article 4 (h) providing for sending troops to a member country under circumstances of war crime, genocide or crimes against humanity. **(See article)**

IGAD warned on Wednesday (December 23) that the persistent drought due to El Niño weather patterns affecting eastern and central Africa would continue for at least three more months. IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center said East Africa nations would receive more rainfall, but not until March. The U.N. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), an estimated 18.5 million people are at risk of starvation due to drought and conflicts in the region.

Ethiopia

The House of Peoples Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on Friday (December 25, 2015) ratified the country's Second-Phase Growth and Transformation (GTP II) Draft Plan, under the Proclamation No.4/2015. The decision came following series of multi-layered consultations with the public and stakeholders. On the Occasion, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn also addressed questions and concerns regarding the major current affairs in the country.

The situation in various parts of the Oromia Regional State has turned to normalcy, the federal and region authorities are beginning to carry out investigations into the violence and several of the towns affected by the violence are organizing peace and development discussions and conferences to address root causes of the disturbances. **(See article)**

State Minister Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie received copy of letters of credence of Gambia's new Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E Mr. Mass Zxi Gye. Ambassador Taye also received copy of letters of credence of the new Ambassador of Turkey to Ethiopia, H.E Mr. Faith Ulusoy and the new Ambassador of Brazil to Ethiopia, Octavio Henque Dias Garcia Cortes (December 25)

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Friday (December 18) for establishing JETRO's Office in Addis Ababa. **(See article)**

H. E State Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-sellasié meets H. E Ms. Clemetine Nkweta-Salami, Representative, UNHCR Representation in Ethiopia, in his office today (December 24, 2015). The two sides discussed bilateral issues on further strengthening partnerships to minimize the challenges related to migration and mobility.

State Minister Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie met the the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia H.E. Mrs. Chantal HEBBERECHT, and deputy head of delegation Mrs. Terhi LEHTINEN and held talks on the current situation in Ethiopia and migration issue respectively on Monday (December 21). Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie expressed his appreciation of the longstanding strategic partnership and stressed that this strategic partnership gives a solid foundation for strong and fruitful corporation. H.E. Mrs. Chantal HEBBERECHT commended Ethiopia commitment on the common Agenda for migration and mobility.

A High level policy dialogue that aimed on leveraging Diaspora resources for growth and structural transformation of the Ethiopian economy was held in Addis Ababa in the presence of government, UNCTAD and representatives of the Diaspora Coordination Offices drawn from the different regional states on Wednesday (December 23 2015).

The most recent Joint Appeal outlining Ethiopia's aid requirements calls for US\$1.4 billion dollars to scale up assistance and support as well as to find sustainable solutions to the challenge of the drought. The appeal notes the significant efforts already made by the Government but underlines the need for further and more extensive efforts. **(See article)**

Ethiopia has been selected to host the next annual meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This annual meeting will take place from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Addis-Abeba (Ethiopia) and will be chaired by Yonas Desta, Director General of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCCH).

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom bode farewell to Mr. Nicholas Kay, on December 22, 2015, who recently finished his mission as UN Special Representative for Somalia. Mr. Kay was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the UN Special Representative for Somalia and had been working ever since April 2013. The discussion mainly focused on the current political and security situations in Somalia and the upcoming 2016 election.

Hundreds of Ethiopians, high profile business company representatives, high level professionals and invited guests were in attendance during the inaugural ceremony of Ethiopian Honorary Consul in Zurich which was opened by representatives of Ethiopian Embassy in Geneva on December 11.

Djibouti

Foreign Minister, Mahamoud Ali Youssouf said on Wednesday (December 23) that the disturbances at Balbala on Monday had led to the death of 7 civilians with 23 injured as well as 50 police officers injured. A number of arrests have been made and the situation was now calm; the Chief Prosecutor had launched a formal investigation. The Interior Ministry denounced the occasion as a “religious event orchestrated by malicious individuals and acting on instructions of sponsors acting from abroad”.

Eritrea

The fourth Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, Abune Diyoskoros, died on Monday (December 21) after a long illness. He controversially replaced Abune Antonios in January 2007 after Abune Antonios was deposed and placed under house arrest for criticizing government interference in church affairs. Abune Antonios is still recognized as the legitimate head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church by the Coptic Orthodox Church in Alexandria.

President Isaias Afwerki paid his second visit this year to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the beginning of this week, holding talks with King Salman Bin Abdelaziz on the strengthening of bilateral ties and Eritrea’s role in the Saudi-led coalition against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The President also met with Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defense, Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. Eritrea is reported to allow Saudi and UAE warships to attack Yemeni rebels from the port of Assab.

Somalia

President Mohamud flew to Belet Weyne on Monday for talks with elders and politicians in Hiiraan region to try to secure their endorsement for the proposed region of Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle. They have rejected the President’s suggestion of Jowhar capital of the proposed state and the venue for the state formation conference and pushed for Belet Weyne as an alternative.

Interior Minister, Abdel El-Razaq Mohamed, met with Egypt's Minister of Interior, Magdy Abdel Ghaafar, in Cairo on Wednesday (December 23) to expand the benefit gained by the Somali police from Egyptian interior ministry expertise.

Italy’s Chief of Defense Staff, Lieutenant General Claudio Graziano arrived in Mogadishu on Wednesday (December 23), for a one-day visit, meeting Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, Defense Minister General Abdulkadir Ali Diini and the Somali army chief. Italy has donated military equipment has been training the Somali army.

The Justice and Religious Affairs Ministry on Tuesday (December 22) banned celebration of Christmas in the country, warning that holding the Christian festivities would threaten the country’s Muslim faith. It said, “Those celebrations are not in any way related to Islam, it is part of another faith, a custom for another religion which has nothing to do with the Islamic faith.”

The outgoing Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Somalia, Nicholas Kay, said on Tuesday this week (December 22) that Somalia was “no longer a failed state but a recovering fragile country” and said political leaders were engaging in political dialogue and negotiations with each other.

South Sudan

Festus Mogae, the former president of Botswana and head of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) for South Sudan urged the parties in Juba on Tuesday (December 22) to expedite the implementation of the peace deal and form a Transitional Government of National Unity as soon as possible. This week the advance team of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) has been arriving in Juba. (See article)

Sudan

The United Nations Security Council has extended for another five months the mandate of the 4,500-strong UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) set up in June 2011 and staffed by Ethiopian troops. The Council also called for the Sudan and South Sudan to resume border demarcation discussions.

Stability returns to parts of Oromia and Amhara Region

In the past few weeks, there have been reports of demonstrations and clashes with security forces in parts of Oromia and Amhara Regional States making headlines. In Oromia, the issue that initially led to protests was the absence of clarity over the status of the draft Joint Integrated Master Plan of Addis Ababa and the Oromia Special Zone. Unfortunately this allowed some elements, both in Ethiopia and outside, to hijack peoples' legitimate concerns that regrettably caused the loss life and destruction of property. In the Amhara Regional State, outside forces also fuelled on a local problem that similarly led to violence.

In relation to the Addis-Oromia Special Zone Masterplan, due to the absence of adequate public consultations, the draft Plan was unclear and questions were raised about its intentions. The Government, both at federal and regional levels, welcomed questions on the aim of the draft and consistently made it clear that there were no barriers to raising any questions on the draft Plan. Nor were there any problems for anyone to organize peaceful and lawful protests, either about the Draft Master Plan for Addis Ababa or any other subject. The Government also repeated on a number of occasions that the Master Plan would only be implemented once a consensus had been reached after in-depth and full discussions.

Some opposition political parties took the opportunity to organize opposition to the draft Master Plan, but they deliberately misled people about the Plan and about the stage it had reached, claiming it was about to be implemented. This led to some street demonstrations in April last year. At that time, the government reiterated its position to hold wide, in-depth, discussions on the draft Plan with the public before taking any steps towards implementation.

A few weeks ago, a series of peaceful protests took place in some of schools and universities in the Oromia Regional State with students wanting to make clear their concern about some aspects of the draft Master Plan. The protests were meant to be legitimate demands for explanation. However, these peaceful, and legitimate, protests did not last long. Opposition parties, and others including opposition groups in the Diaspora who have remained determined to hijack the peoples' legitimate concerns continued to try to destabilize the region, issued series of false propaganda statements, and deliberately stirred up violence. In some areas, the previously peaceful protests turned into banditry and lawlessness with criminal attacks on property and people. The alleged cause of the violence was a misinformation as to the aims of the new proclamation issued by the Oromia Regional Council on administration of cities. The

Proclamation was all about promotion of transparency in government and of efforts to improve the efficiency of the city administration and encourage integrated development in several urban centers. It had also the purpose of allowing cities use their own revenues for infrastructure development. Opposition elements claimed, without any evidence, that this was intended to be the basis of implementing the Addis Ababa Master Plan.

Some external opposition elements, including some groups based in Asmara and funded by the Government of Eritrea then set about orchestrating violent protests. These elements, together with the aid of local opposition parties, were able to orchestrate the violence across the region and encourage criminal elements to get involved in violence and looting. As a result, in various parts of the region attacks were committed on model farms and farmers' houses and residences, banks, *kebele* and court offices, and police stations. They also attacked other public institutions and the property of investors, as well as dug up and blocked roads, created barriers and stopped vehicles and obstructed the traffic. As the incident turned violent, unfortunately and most regrettably, there had been loss of life and injury of different levels. There was also destruction of private and public property.

In some cases, these armed men made no secret of the fact that they were supported by externally based parties such as OLF and Ginbot 7, based in Asmara. Ginbot 7 following a number of terrorist bombing efforts in Ethiopia, had been declared a terrorist organization by the Parliament. A few months ago, in Asmara, it publicly announced the formation of a new organization and stressed that its aim was to launch an armed struggle dedicated to the violent overthrow of the democratically elected government in Addis Ababa. Its leader also announced that members of Ginbot 7 are actively engaged in fomenting the violence in some parts of Oromia.

From the outset, groups with vested interests, who do not want to see these issues resolved, have also consistently and deliberately encouraged the crisis on social media. They want to see the problems continue and indeed spread. Indeed, Facebook and other social media have been filled with deliberate efforts to incite ethnic and racial tension. Members of opposition parties in western countries, as well as those based in Eritrea, have played a specific part in fanning this unrest through social media, continuing to deliberately try to mislead people about the nature and the current standing of the draft Master Plan.

And from the outset, of the protests, the Oromia Regional State authorities have made it clear adequate consultations with the public should have been in place. Equally, they have urged those protesting to refrain from violence but have also made it clear they have a duty to preserve law and order and prevent violence and destruction. Both the Federal Government and the Oromia Regional Government have expressed their regrets for any deaths that have occurred, and expressed condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives or who have been injured in the demonstrations. Now that the situation has returned to normalcy, the federal and region authorities are beginning to carry out investigations into the violence and several of the towns affected by the violence are organizing peace and development discussions and conferences to address root causes of the disturbances.

In the Amhara Regional State, the outbreak of violence had very different ostensible causes but there was a considerable similarity in the way outsiders manipulated a supposed grievance for political purposes under the influence of external factors and groups. The question of the Qemant community of North Gonder for self-rule was on the table for a long time. The request went to the House of Federation that considered it according to the Constitution. The House of Federation upheld the request and following its decision the Amhara National Regional State Council accepted the Qemant community's constitutional right of self-administration.

Following that some disagreements occurred between the Region State and the Qemant community in implementing the decision of the House of Federation on the ground. While the Qemant communities'

demands for implementation of the decision of the House of Federation was legitimate, some anti-peace elements worked to fuel up the disagreements and create discord between the Qemant communities and the Amhara community members living close by. As a result violent clash erupted, which claimed loss of life and destruction of property. The Amhara Regional State authorities and the regional President were quick to deplore the violence. The regional President has issued a statement greatly regretting any deaths that have occurred and expressing his condolences to all affected families. He has also urged both sides to refrain from any further violence. The regional authorities, he emphasizes, are ready for an open dialogue on any of all the issues in dispute. Currently, the situation has returned to normalcy.

Joint Appeal to combine efforts to address the challenges of the drought

The most recent Joint Appeal outlining Ethiopia's aid requirements and the plans to combine efforts and address the challenges of the El Niño -induced drought was launched two weeks ago on Friday, December 11, in Addis Ababa by the Government and a Consortium of International Organizations. The National Risk Management Commission of Ethiopia presented the document together with the United Nations Ethiopia Humanitarian Support Coordination Bureau. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund partnered with the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team in the appeal. The occasion was attended by high-level government officials, international development partners and representatives of various countries, among them the Ambassadors and representatives of the U.S. Britain, Denmark, Norway, Australia, Turkey, China, Japan and other embassies in Addis Ababa as well as international donor agencies and development cooperation organizations.

The appeal by the Government and more than 65 humanitarian and development organizations calls for US\$1.4 billion dollars to scale up assistance and support as well as to find sustainable solutions to the challenge of the drought. The appeal notes the significant efforts already made by the Government but underlines the need for further and more extensive efforts. .

As the extent of the drought has become apparent, the Ethiopian Government has underlined the need for increased international support. The Commissioner for the National Risk management Commission, Mitiku Kassa, noted that the Government had so far allocated 200 million dollars to help deal with the impact of the drought. He said the launch of the appeal should pave the way for more extensive joint action in 2016, action that could integrate donations and support to address the effects of the drought. The Commissioner said that at the moment the estimates were that some 10.2 million citizens would need urgent aid in the coming year which requires US\$1.4 billion dollars. The Government had so far set aside a further additional US\$97 million dollars to support food distribution for early 2016 and the pledges from donors stands at \$163 million dollars. He noted that international donor agencies had a number of other major problems currently with the protracted instability in countries like Yemen, Iraq and Syria, and this had affected the pledges of assistance for Ethiopia and other drought-affected countries in Africa.

The Commissioner gave details of the six regions most affected by the drought. A majority of those suffering from the drought are to be found in the Oromia and Amhara Regional States, with 37% and 22% of the total of over 10 million respectively. Of the other regions 15% of the victims are in the Somalia Regional State, 12% in Tigray, another 7% in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State and 4% in the Afar Regional State.

The joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' document outlines the proposed country specific strategy as well as the possible operational response plans. The document emphasized that the Government of Ethiopia had significantly strengthened its National Disaster Risk Management approach during the past years and many lessons have been learnt. New systems have been set up and strengthened to ensure risks have been limited and that the crisis response has become effective. In this context, the Disaster Risk Management Strategic Program Investment Framework of the country also

serves as a tool to translate the Disaster Risk Management policy, launched in 2013, into practical application. The document also notes the progress made recently with the Government taking further steps to strengthen its overall national disaster risk management approach. This has involved transforming the management of the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector into a full commission, the National Disaster Risk Management Coordination Commission, in order to ensure a more streamlined and effective disaster risk reaction and response across all Government sectors and activities.

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onchie, emphasized that the Humanitarian Requirement Document for Ethiopia in 2016 called for a multi-sectoral response, including food, health, nutrition, sanitation, water and education. However, she said the most critical element today was that food assistance should be provided on a sufficient scale and, above all, quickly. The UN Ethiopian Humanitarian Support Coordination Bureau, calling on countries to offer urgent support for Ethiopia, also noted Ethiopia's generosity in hosting over 700 thousand refugees from neighboring countries.

Overall, the provisions in the document will help minimize problems in food supply to those affected by drought and those suffering from malnutrition. They are also designed to provide accessibility as well as integrate humanitarian and development assistance and cooperation. The appeal document emphasizes the importance of international support to Ethiopia tilting towards more humanitarian support at least in the short term. Ethiopia, has also underlined the critical importance of being able to ensure that its development progress over the last decade is preserved and not put at risk.

Meanwhile, the US Government announced \$88 million of aid to help feed people in drought-stricken areas on Friday last week (December 18). This will provide for another 116,000 metric tons of relief food aid to address the needs of 2.6 million people in 74 districts. It will bring the total amount of humanitarian aid provided in 2015 to more than \$435 million. Canada has also announced that it is contributing \$30 million to several United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations working to provide emergency humanitarian assistance. These include the United Nations World Food Program, United Nations Children's Fund, CARE Canada, Concern Worldwide, World Vision Canada and Doctors Without Borders Canada. The Canadian Government provided grants totaling \$5million to the World Food Program and UNICEF in October. These will help provide critical food, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation needs. In a statement, the Canadian Government said "Ethiopia can count on Canada's continued engagement and support. We are concerned by the food security situation in Ethiopia and will continue to monitor it and act quickly to protect the poorest and most vulnerable."

Signing the Memorandum of Understanding for a JETRO Office in Addis Ababa

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Friday (December 18) for establishing JETRO's Office in Addis Ababa. The Memorandum was signed by Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros Adhanom and Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige, Chairman and CEO of JETRO, at JETRO's Headquarters on the sidelines of the International Conference on Universal Health Coverage held in Tokyo, last week.

During the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, Dr. Tedros hailed the decision to open JETRO Addis Ababa Office as a historic episode showcasing Japan's genuine commitment and a demonstration of its determination to have a collaborative engagement with Ethiopia. He added that the presence of JETRO in Ethiopia would boost the investment flow and trade volume between the two countries. Expressing his appreciation on behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Government of Japan and to JETRO for their support for such cooperation, Dr. Tedros said, " Ethiopia wishes to attract more Foreign Direct Investment from Japan and it is my hope that the signing

of the Memorandum of Understanding for establishing JETRO's Office in Addis Ababa will encourage many more Japan's companies to invest in Ethiopia and further strengthen the investment relations between our two countries."

Emphasizing that economic diplomacy was at the heart of Ethiopia's Foreign Policy, the Minister said this decision would boost the confidence of the Japanese Private sector to invest in Ethiopia and do business with the country. In addition to the trade and investment potential and employment opportunities this would provide, the Minister noted that the enhanced involvement of the Japanese private sector would also help in the transfer of innovation, science and technology and the Japanese work ethic to Ethiopia. Dr. Tedros noted that a good number of government institutions and companies in the private sector in Ethiopia had already streamlined the adoption and appropriation of the KAIZEN Philosophy, which, he said, had already started to pay off in terms of improving product quality and productivity. "With your support", he said, "Ethiopia has now its own KAIZEN Institute." This was dedicated to adapting the Kaizen philosophy, system and management techniques for local implementation mechanisms. In fact, he noted, since the introduction of Kaizen, the contribution of the Kaizen theory to improving efficiency and effectiveness of human power-working in different industries in Ethiopia had been immense. It was in September 2015 that the Japan International Cooperation Agency signed a preliminary agreement with Ethiopian Kaizen Institute to finance the construction of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, a Human Resource Development Center for business and industry in Addis Ababa.

Dr. Tedros also pointed out that the Government of Japan in its bold decision to open JETRO's Office in Addis Ababa had taken an important practical step in forging a platform for enhanced bilateral trade and investment ties. "Let me take this opportunity to assure you", he said, "that the Government of Ethiopia will support the JETRO Office that will be opened in Addis in the near future so that it functions at its best level, and by way of supporting Japanese business dealings with Ethiopia, we'll also make sure that your stay is as comfortable as possible."

Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige, the Chairman and CEO of JETRO noted that the opening of a JETRO Addis Ababa Office, following a series of joint consultations and substantial progress, had reached such a critical juncture. He stressed that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding made it clear that the Government of Japan was committed to enhancing the existing relations between the two countries. He also said that he believed that "the establishment of our office in your country will further contribute to boosting the bilateral investment and trade ties, particularly in terms of attracting Japanese companies and investors into Ethiopia." He said improving the investment situation and the business environment in Ethiopia was indispensable for attracting Foreign Direct Investment. Mr. Ishige said, "I believe that the JETRO Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia will contribute to your plans for the industrialization of Ethiopia. We will make further coordinated efforts to scale up our business dealings with Ethiopia." He also noted that JETRO, while making all necessary preparations for the establishment of the JETRO Addis Ababa Office, was already making efforts to attract Japanese companies into Ethiopia and to promote Ethiopian exports. In this regard, he said, "we organized an Ethiopian Investment Seminar this April together with your Embassy in Tokyo;" and JETRO had established a Japan Pavilion in the general fashion product exhibition "Origin Africa" in October 2015 which had been held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. JETRO had extended support to four Japanese companies engaged in the trading of textile machinery to participate on that occasion.

Mr. Ishige disclosed that his office would invite the "Ethiopian Investment Committee" for the first time to take part in the African Investment Promotion Forum, an organization which aims to help streamline the procedures and enhance after-service for Japanese companies wishing to begin business with Africa and establish facilities in the region. The Investment Promotion Forum, also works to reinforce networking between investment promotion offices of major African countries and JETRO, to strengthen the function and role of JETRO as a bridge when Japanese companies expand to Africa, and utilize the entry of Japanese companies to advance African industries and create employment opportunities. Signing the Memorandum of Understanding, Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige said, "It is a great pleasure and honor for me to

be able to sign today this Memorandum regarding the establishment of the JETRO Addis Ababa Office." Expressing his deep appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia and particularly to the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the initiative for establishing the JETRO Addis Ababa Office, Mr. Ishige also called for Ethiopia's continuous support for and cooperation with the office.

In fact, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding came after a series of bilateral talks and consultations between the two countries. In January 2014, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn requested Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, during the latter's visit to Ethiopia, to encourage the opening of a JETRO Addis Ababa office with a view to accelerate the Japanese private sector business and investment in Ethiopia. A request was sent by Ethiopia's Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, and in September this year, Prime Minister Abe officially announced the decision to open the JETRO Addis Ababa Office during a meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam on the sidelines of the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

JETRO, the Japan External Trade Organization, is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential. In addition to its Headquarters in Tokyo and the JETRO Institute of Developing Economies in Osaka, as well as 43 regional offices across Japan, JETRO currently oversees the involvement of the Japanese private sector worldwide through a total of 73 overseas offices.

Somalia's progress and the electoral process in 2016

The outgoing Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Somalia, Nicholas Kay, said on Tuesday this week (December 22) that Somalia was "no longer a failed state but a recovering fragile country". He emphasized that during the last three years the country had stabilized but he also added, "there was still a lot of work to do." He told the Associated Press "The country in the past two-three years has come together quite significantly. It is both politically stable and developed as well." He said the insecurity caused mainly by Al-Shabaab, which is linked to al-Qaida, remained its greatest challenge. He described the political process in Somalia as successful with political leaders of the country engaging in political dialogue and negotiations with each other.

While Somalia does remain one of the world's most fragile countries, emerging as it is from long conflict, some regions are showing progress towards a more stable and increasingly democratic state. The country is in far better shape politically than when President Hassan Sheikh took office in 2012 when the Federal Government of Somalia was established in September 2012. Concerted efforts have been made to build a foundation for a stable and democratic state, including the adoption of a new provisional constitution, and the appointment of a new Parliament by a national constituent assembly, the election by Parliament of a Speaker as well as the peaceful selection of President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud. After more than 20 years of conflict and crisis, the Federal Government has been welcomed by the international community and by its neighbors. Somaliland, which proclaimed its independence from Somalia in 1991 and has operated as a *de facto* nation state without any formal recognition by the international community, has also made positive gains in democracy and development.

For the first time in over two decades, the country has witnessed a long period of cooperation among the leadership and the two key arms of government, the executive and the legislative, resulting in the concerted efforts to reach endorsement by the international community in September 2013 of a New Deal Compact for Somalia (the Somali Compact), including the Somaliland Special Arrangements. Somalia has, with the assistance of neighboring countries like Ethiopia and Kenya, accomplished major progress

in the past years. The joint operations of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with Somali forces has been successful in liberating approximately 70% of South and Central Somalia from Al-Shabaab control, allowing further stabilization of the country; the number of piracy attacks has reduced to a minimal number; the foundation for a democratic future has been put in place with the adoption of political and economic reforms; and legal frameworks, governance structures and public financial management process have been initiated.

The need for holding of elections in 2016 is clearly laid down in the Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The Federal Government in its Vision 2016 plan articulated the need to hold a credible transfer of power by 2016 as a matter of top priority. The constitutionally mandated four-year term of the Federal Government ends in August 2016. Originally, it was hoped the situation would allow a one-person one-vote election, but after comprehensive consultation with members of the Federal Parliament, regional state authorities and representatives of civil society, the Government announced that this would not be possible in 2016.

Equally, under the influence of the international community and in its partners, the Federal Government remains committed to a democratic, inclusive and transparent transfer of power in 2016 and has repeatedly said there would be no extension of its authority. The Federal Government developed the National Consultative process to reach a consensus on the most appropriate model for the 2016 electoral process. In September, the Federal Government hosted the first three-day Consultative Conference in Mogadishu and formed a National Consultative Forum tasked to deliberate on the process and determine the best possible format for next year's parliamentary and presidential elections. The Forum was also tasked to carry out nation-wide consultations before reaching a decision on the 2016 election format by the end of this year. The National Consultative Forum convened a conference in Mogadishu on October 14 in which it discussed the best Electoral Process to provide a fair, acceptable and peaceful election for August 2016.

Following these consultations across the country, the second plenary of the National Consultative Forum on the 2016 electoral process opened in Mogadishu on Sunday (December 13) with national and regional leaders reviewing the outcome of public consultations across Somalia and within the diaspora and deliberating on the most appropriate and inclusive electoral process for 2016. The Forum delegates, and others attending, discussed four different options for the process. The first was a Nation-wide Electoral College set up to elect all 275 MPs, to combine nation-wide political parties with an electoral system of proportional representation. Second: State-level Electoral Colleges, formed in each of the existing and emerging Federal Member States, should elect MPs to represent their respective Member States. Third: District-level Electoral Colleges formed in each of the 92 districts based on the pre-1991 administrative divisions to elect MPs for each district. The final option was for a Clan-based Electoral College to be formed on the basis of choices made by clan elders but with enhanced representation to select MPs to represent their clans as had been the case in 2012 process

The second plenary session of the National Consultative Forum also reviewed the conclusions from the public consultations held across Somalia on November 15, 16 and 22 and with Somalis in the diaspora on December 5. This process was welcomed as "a major exercise of participatory politics", manifesting the principal values of democracy. The Forum expressed its appreciation to all participants and to the authorities of the existing and emerging Federal Member States, as well as to the Somali Embassy in Kenya, for hosting the public consultations across the country and with Somalis in the diaspora. The National Consultative Forum also welcomed the free expression of many different and often divergent views that had been demonstrated in the course of the public consultations. It underlined that the Somali population showed its unity in its desire to see a political transition when the mandates of the legislature and the executive ended in August and September 2016 respectively. The Forum also welcomed the

active participation of women and youth and emphasized that the electoral process must reflect the diversity of Somalia.

It was clear from the outcome of the regional consultations that there was no single electoral option preferred by all Somalis. The conclusion that the Forum therefore endorsed was that, given the divergent views on the four electoral models, only a model combining elements from each of them could ensure an electoral process that reflects the Somali people's preferences and critical conditions. The spirit of compromise that had governed the deliberations was welcomed.

Against this background, the National Consultative Forum agreed on the formulation of the Mogadishu Declaration that included a number of important principles and actions. The representation should then be based on balance between the constituency and clan. Electoral colleges would convene and vote in the Federal State capitals. These should be diverse and contain representation from women, youth and civil society. There should be a minimum of fixed number of seats reserved for women in the two houses of the Parliament. There should be enhanced representation of youth and marginalized groups. A political roadmap should be developed and agreed for the period between now and the implementation of the electoral process in 2016, and also for the period 2016 to 2020 to deliver universal suffrage elections in 2020. This roadmap should be an integral part of the final agreement on the electoral process for 2016. The final details of the electoral model and its implementation will be discussed with the different constituencies and agreed and launched at a ceremony to be held in Kismayo on January 10, 2016.

Concluding its deliberations, the National Consultative Forum expressed its thanks to the members of its Task Force and the Technical Support Team that organized the public consultations across Somalia and the plenary meetings of the National Consultative Forum. At the end of the second plenary of the National Consultative Forum, Somalia's international partners including the United Nations, the African Union, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Italy welcomed the Mogadishu Declaration. UN Special Representative, Nicholas Kay, underlined the necessity to adhere strictly to the Mogadishu Declaration and reach a final agreement on the details of the electoral model by the January deadline. He said the Declaration signified progress towards an appropriate and inclusive electoral process, but "it would have been preferable to have agreed and presented a final electoral model." He added: "I urge all stakeholders to remain focused on the work that still needs to be done in order to complete the task at hand." He underlined the importance of all Somalis respecting and implementing the principles and actions outlined in the Mogadishu Declaration. He said: "It is important that all actors fully support the Declaration and that there are no adverse actions that could undermine this important agreement or block progress towards the ultimate goal of one-person one-vote elections. The United Nations stands ready to continue to lend its support to this process, and it will work closely with Somali stakeholders and other international partners to ensure that a successful, inclusive and transparent electoral process will be conducted in 2016."

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission takes charge in South Sudan

This week, the advance team of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) has been arriving in Juba. 150 members arrived in Juba on Monday (December 21), another 150 on Wednesday and the final group of 309 on Friday. South Sudan President Kiir who directed all security organs and military personnel to facilitate their activity met with the SPLM-IO's Chief Negotiator, General Taban Deng Gai, on Tuesday. General Deng said the meeting focused on the way forward for implementation of the peace deal. He said the team's arrival indicated the "end of this war, and the public should expect the arrival of my chairman and commander in chief, Dr. Riek Machar to Juba during January." He emphasized the need to fully implement the peace agreement to end the suffering of the people. Earlier, David Deng Athorbei, chairman of the national committee set up by the government for

the reception of the SPLM-IO, welcomed the team, equally stressing the need to officially end the war with their arrival to Juba. The advance team included senior officials who are members of the various institutions set up by the peace agreement and the parties began meetings on Tuesday to tackle the withdrawal of forces from Juba and the deployment of joint police and army components, as well as the process to amend the transitional constitution, select ministerial portfolios and designate ministers according to the power-sharing agreement.

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) headed by Festus Mogae, the former president of Botswana, was created to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement by IGAD and it reports to IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations on progress made and obstacles faced in the process. In advance of the arrival of the SPLM-IO advance team, at its inaugural meeting in Juba on 27 November, Mr. Mogae underlined the importance of the National Constitutional Amendment Committee starting its work to accelerate the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity and set January 22, 2016 as the deadline for the establishment of the Transitional Government. The JMEC will also concern itself with the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM), the Economic and Financial Management Authority (EFMA) and other instruments created by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Speaking in Juba on Tuesday (December 22) at the first meeting of the JMEC involving all parties, chairman Mogae urged the parties to expedite the implementation of the peace deal and form a transitional government of national unity as soon as possible. Mr. Mogae commended the SPLM-IO for its arrival and said the meeting signified the starting of the implementation of the deal. He said, "Your return indicates the commitment you have to restoring peace and implementing the Agreement in South Sudan. Your return is not the end of the road, but the start of another important journey. With your presence in Juba, we can truly say that the chapter of implementation is now open. Above all, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of South Sudan for enabling the first group of the SPLM/A (IO) to return." He reminded the parties that there was no room for renegotiation of the peace deal, calling on them to immediately begin the implementation of the provisions in the document without any delay even if it would mean skipping some of the Christmas holiday.

Last week, Mr. Mogae submitted a timetable to the parties, detailing activities to be conducted in advance of forming Transitional Government of National Unity by 22 January. He said on Tuesday: "the implementation calendar that I issued last week was necessarily ambitious. Some might say that we are being too ambitious, given the time of year and given the complexity involved. To the first point, let me respond that ambition is necessary. An accelerated plan is necessary. We have limited time to do things that should have been done weeks ago. We have to make up for the time lost. This can be achieved if we all work effectively and engage in good faith." He urged the parties to ensure that the main pre-transitional institutions should begin immediately. These are the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission for further action on security arrangements nationally; the Joint Operations Centre for implementing security arrangements for the capital, Juba; and the National Constitutional Amendment Committee to begin the work necessary to technically conform the national constitution to the provisions of the Agreement.

Mr. Mogae demanded feedback within three days from the leadership of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) on their activities and challenges, to see how best they could be supported in their efforts in future. He said the JMEC body would also hear from the parties on the status achieved in the cantonment of rival forces. He directed the parties to select ministerial portfolios and ensure that the process leads to formation of an inclusive government. He stressed he intended to move forward with all these steps, so that by the end of the year, he could positively report to the IGAD Heads of State and Government, the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council the status of implementation of the Agreement, "and ask them, where necessary, for the action required of them to further support the peace process." Mr. Mogae expressed hope that the

momentum that existed would continue with concerted and meaningful action to implement the commitments provided for in the agreement.

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission is of critical importance in implementing the peace agreement, and it is important that it gains the trust of the parties which still remain distrustful of each other. After reluctantly signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in August, President Kiir's main reservation was the creation of an international body to oversee and monitor the peace agreement putting this above national governing institutions, and, he argued, in effect creating an undeclared Regional and UN Trusteeship. He used this argument to issue a decree replacing South Sudan's 10 states with 28 new states even though this announcement stakeholders claim directly contradicted the Government's commitment to implement the peace agreement it signed on August 26. The announcement also ignored the primary tasks of the soon-to-be-formed Transitional Government of National Unity that will have the task of initiating any amendments to the constitution and will address and such fundamental issues as the structure of the state. After that announcement, the opposition questioned the commitment of the Government to the peace process and both IGAD and the Troika of the United States, United Kingdom and Norway expressed their serious concern. They proposed the Transitional National Government should address the issue of federalism and decentralization, but the JMEC can still use its mandate to negotiate with the parties in the peace process to help create a state structure which can benefit the people of south Sudan economically, politically and culturally as well as focus on humanitarian aspects, working with partners to address food shortages, internal displacement and other issues.

The AU Peace and Security Council calls for intervention in Burundi

The African Union's Peace and Security Council last week approved draft plans to send troops to Burundi despite opposition from the Burundi delegation. The Peace and Security Council invoked a clause in the AU Constitutive Act, Article 4 (h) that provides for the sending of troops to a member country without that country's permission under circumstances of war crime, genocide or crimes against humanity. Earlier in the week a report by AU human rights investigators reported "arbitrary killings, torture and the arbitrary... closure of some civil society organizations and the media" in Burundi. The AU warned that it would not allow another "genocide" in Africa. The UN has also warned that Burundi could be on the "cusp of civil war" and asked the international community to intervene. The AU's Peace and Security Commissioner, Tsmail Chergui, said the Peace and Security Council meeting generally agreed on the "urgent need to stop the violence," noting on his Twitter page on the first day of the debate on Thursday (December 17) that a very clear message was "coming out of the ongoing PSC meeting: the killings in Burundi must stop immediately." In fact, the AU Peace and Security Council move appeared to be to a response to the continuing reports of revenge killings in the capital Bujumbura where more than 400 people have been killed since April and fears that further killings and a humanitarian crisis may erupt. An AU official said "Members agreed, having been briefed on the contingency plans by the standby force, that it would be a safeguard measure to have peacekeeping troops sent there." He added that this would however "depend on whether violence continues in Burundi." An AU fact-finding mission returned from Burundi at the beginning of last week its preliminary findings noted that "members of the team heard reports of arbitrary killings, torture and the arbitrary... closure of some civil society organizations and the media". The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, also urged the international community to take "robust, decisive" action instead of "fiddling around the edges". He said that "Burundi is at bursting point, on the very cusp of a civil war" which could have "ethnic overtones" similar to past conflicts in Burundi. He said at least 400 people had been killed, nearly 3,500 arrested and at least 220,000 people fled the country since April. At a special session

convened at the US request to discuss the conflict, the UN Human Rights Council resolved to dispatch independent investigators to Burundi to probe abuses.

The Peace and Security Council was briefed by the African Commission, and heard from the representatives of Burundi as well as the East African Standby Force and from Uganda as the East African Community designated mediator. It expressed its deep concern over the current political stalemate in Burundi as well as over increasing insecurity and violence and the attendant serious humanitarian consequences including internal displacement of population and refugee flows towards neighboring countries. The Council underlined that it would not allow the situation to degenerate into widespread violence, with catastrophic consequences for Burundi and the entire region. It reaffirmed its responsibilities towards an early response to contain crisis situations, respect for the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedoms, the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law, prevention of policies that might lead to crimes against humanity, and the mandate of the African Standby Force including preventive deployment to prevent a dispute or a conflict from escalating, or on-going violent conflict from spreading to neighbouring areas. It also recalled the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Peace and Security Council to move in a timely manner to address conflicts on the continent. It decided, therefore, “to authorize the deployment of an African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), for an initial period of six months, renewable”.

The PSC said that the mandate of an intervention force would include: preventing deterioration of the security situation, monitoring its evolution and reporting developments on the ground; contributing, within its capacity and in its areas of deployment, to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat; and contributing to the creation of the necessary conditions for the successful holding of the inter-Burundian dialogue, as well as facilitating, with other international actors, the implementation any agreement the Burundian parties would reach, including disarmament of militias and other illegal groups, the protection of political personalities and other actors whose security would be threatened. It decided MAPROBU should have an initial strength of up to 5,000 military personnel and police, including formed police units, with an appropriate civilian component and that it would be integrated with human rights observers and military experts deployed to Burundi. It requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to immediately undertake consultations with Member States, including the countries of the region in the framework of the East African Standby Force, to generate the troops and police elements needed to quickly reach the authorized strength as well as take the necessary steps to develop concept of operations for MAPROBU and its estimated budget. It requested Member States to provide the financial and other support required and international partners to provide the necessary technical, financial and logistical support to facilitate early deployment of MAPROBU and effective implementation of its mandate. The Council, in particular, urged the UN Security Council to support the deployment of MAPROBU and authorize a logistical support package funded by assessed contributions to the UN budget. It also requested the UN Security Council to adopt, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a resolution to support this initiative.

The Council urged the Government of Burundi to confirm, within 96 hours, its acceptance of the deployment of MAPROBU and to cooperate fully with the Mission. It said that “in the event of non- acceptance of the deployment of MAPROBU, it would recommend to the Assembly of the Union the implementation of article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act relating to intervention in a Member State in certain serious circumstances. It requested all Member States to extend their full cooperation and appealed to international partners to fully support the Council’s decision.

The use of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) is the most likely option for a force to be deployed. It is one of the five regional forces for peace support operations in the African Standby Force and AU peace operations have usually drawn contributors from states local to the relevant sub-region and even from

neighbors as in the case of AMISOM in Somalia, or in Mali and the Central African Republic, as well as for the AU-authorized coalitions against the Lord's Resistance Army in central Africa and Boko Haram in West Africa. The Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) declared its full operational capability in December a year ago. It would, however, have to collect the required 5,000 troops, police, and civilian experts from those of its 10 member states that have pledged personnel. The member states of EASF are Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda, and the major pledges are of one battalion of troops each from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Burundi has also pledged a formed police unit, some military observers and some civilian experts. The AU would, therefore, have to decide which pledges to use in MAPROBU. The EASF has yet to deploy its full force in a real operation, although several of its member states now have considerable experience in peace operations, particularly Ethiopia and Rwanda. Another possibility would be for the AU to assemble a group of states to provide the troops, police, and civilian experts for MAPROBU. This would allow for greater flexibility to choose the most suitable states to be involved. All of this would be consequent on whether MAPROBU is deployed and on whether it is acceptable to the Burundi Government.

The Burundi Government responded negatively to the PSC's decision. Al Jazeera quoted a Burundi government spokesperson on Saturday, (December 19) as saying: "We will not allow foreign troops in Burundi. We don't need them; we have a legal and democratically elected government that should be consulted before making such decisions." The spokesperson added: the presence of such a force in the country will be perceived as an "invasion and occupation force." Even if the Burundi Government does consent to a deployment of AU troops some experts have said that this would also require a United Nations Security Council resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.

The Deputy Chairman of the African Union Commission, Erastus Mwencha, said the approval of a peacekeeping force by the African Union Peace and Security Council was meant to prevent further violence and protect the citizens of Burundi. He said it would be "a very sad development" if Burundi rejected their deployment. He said when the decision was taken Burundi "was given an opportunity to put across its case, and the decision was taken after due consideration of Burundi's point of view". Mr. Mwencha said the job of any government is to protect its citizens, but the Burundian government had not shown it could do this. He said, "It is obvious everybody is aware that people are dying in Burundi, people dying in the streets, bodies being collected in some of the environs of Bujumbura, and the African Union force, if you look at the mandate, it is a prevention and protection. And that is really the responsibility of any government, but which we see is not happening. But if the situation continues, the African Union and international community cannot sit by and watch genocide if it is going to develop into that genocide."

Following the PSC statement, the UN Security Council issued a press statement voicing "deep concern at the continuing escalation of violence in Burundi" and calling for urgent acceleration of mediation efforts by East African States, urging all Burundian stakeholders to fully cooperate with a proposed African Union peace-keeping mission. It also said that should mediation efforts not restart then the AU and the UN should consider other options. The Security Council statement "noted the AU decision to deploy an African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), and called on all Burundian

stakeholders to fully cooperate and urged African Member States to pledge troops and police for it." It also highlighted the need for "UN contingency planning to develop options for the international community to respond to any further deterioration and of urgently deploying a UN team under the leadership of the UN Special Adviser to Conflict Prevention, Jamal Benomar, to work with the Government, AU and other partners to develop such options." Observers have already underlined that any solution will require concerted and sustained political leadership both from within the region as well as from the AU.