

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



A Week in the Horn



Contents



Dr Tedros Adhanom,
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News in brief

Articles:

EU President's statement on his meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam

South Sudan and Sudan once again agree to implement their peace agreements

South Sudan Economic Partners Forum meeting in Washington

Eritrea's efforts to get sanctions lifted doesn't include UN Special Rapporteur access

The second meeting of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa

Somalia/Somaliland agree to continue a dialogue at talks in Turkey

Ambassador Berhane met a delegation from France's National Defence Institute



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News in Brief



President Girma Woldegiorgis sent a letter of condolence to the President of the United States, Barack Obama, over the tragic terror attacks in Boston at the 117th Boston Marathon.

Prime Minister Hailemariam in Brussels met with European Union President Herman Van Rompuy in Wednesday (April 17th), and with European Commission President Barroso on Thursday. The Prime Minister noted that the EU was Ethiopia's foremost development partner. In talks with European MPs, subjects covered included Ethiopia's procedures for providing land to foreign investors, current developments in Somalia and relations with Eritrea.

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs held discussions with a delegation from the French Institute of Advanced Studies for National Defence, (Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale), on Monday. He also met a Serbian delegation led by Mr. Oliver Antic, Counselor to the President of Serbia later in the week. (See article)

Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives has referred ratification of the Nile Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement to a Standing Committee for discussion and approval. The Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) was signed by Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania in May 2010 and by Burundi a year later.

Tullow Oil says it is encouraged by the hydrocarbon indications in its Sabisa-1 well, and says there is "emerging evidence for a working petroleum system in the previously undrilled South Omo Basin."

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa is holding its second meeting this weekend, in Bahr Dar on the shores of Lake Tana. The theme is "Security and Organized Crime in Africa". (See article)



President Isaias of Eritrea sent a message to President Morsi of Egypt this week supporting Egypt's claim to "historic rights" to the Nile water, while Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh held talks with Egypt's Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr on human trafficking of refugees from Eritrea. (See article)



The EU Director of Cooperation for Sub-Saharan Africa, Ms. Francesca Mosca, on a visit to Mogadishu this week gave details of the EU's new framework for assistance to the Somalia government, including its commitment to provide €22 million in direct budget support for public finance management and public administration.

Thousands of citizens demonstrated in Mogadishu on Monday to denounce Al-Shabaab attacks on the Supreme Court in Mogadishu and on a Turkish Red Crescent and AMISOM convoy on Sunday (April 14th). A total of 32 people were killed including two famous Somali lawyers, and 58 others wounded.

The Somalia Council of Ministers has approved new counter-terrorism legislation intended to bring the country into line with international best practice. This will now be sent to Parliament for debate and ratification.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and President of Somaliland Ahmed Mahmoud Silanyo met in the Turkish capital, Ankara at the weekend, and agreed to continue dialogue "between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Government of Somaliland". (See article)

President Ahmed Mahmud Silanyo met with UK Prime Minister Cameron this week. Discussions covered last weekend's Somalia/Somaliland talks in Ankara as well as UK aid to Somaliland, investment, improving the security sector, cooperation in the war on terror and anti-piracy activities, and democratic governance.

Parliamentary elections in Somaliland have been postponed until 2015 after the Somaliland House of Elders (Guurti) voted to extend the term of office of the lower House of Parliament, the House of Representatives, for a further 2 years and 27 days.



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News in Brief



President Al-Bashir paid his first visit to South Sudan since its independence last weekend, and held talks with President Salva Kiir. (See article)

Sudan's President Omer Hassan al-Bashir this week issued a decree commuting the sentences of nine army officers convicted over their role in an alleged coup attempt thwarted last November.

Representatives from the Sudanese government, the African Union and the United Nations, the tripartite coordination mechanism on Darfur, met on Sunday (April 14th) to discuss the increasing number of security incidents in Darfur and problems of peacekeepers from the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The Sudan Government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) fighting in South Kordofan state say they are ready to hold talks. These are due to start in Addis Ababa on Tuesday, (April 23rd), following an invitation from the AU High Level Implementation Panel.



Djibouti's Speaker of Parliament, Idris Arnaud Ali, has said Djibouti is planning to send additional troops to join those already operating in Somalia under AMISOM. The reinforcements will be to boost the security and stability and help prevent any security vacuum if Ethiopian forces leave.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) graduated 197 Somali police officers on Tuesday (April 16th) at the end of a three-month public order management training course held at the Djiboutian National Police Training Academy.



The South Sudan Economic Partners Forum of the US, South Sudan, the EU, Norway, the UK and representatives of other governments and international organizations met in Washington. It accepted an umbrella agreement to provide for innovative financing and development of a new South Sudan Partnership Fund. (See article)

South Sudan has confirmed that its first oil shipment for export to international markets, reached Sudanese territory last weekend. This was the first crude oil through the pipeline since production stopped in January last year. It reached Sudanese territory the day after President Al-Bashir's day long visit to South Sudan to hold talks with President Salva Kiir.

South Sudanese President Salva Kiir on Monday (April 15th) issued a decree withdrawing some of the executive powers he had previously delegated to Vice-President, Riek Machar. This did not affect the Vice-President's constitutional status.



Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta outlined a five-year agenda at the opening of the Kenyan Parliament on Tuesday (April 16th). He placed the emphasis on job creation and on the provision of loans for women and youth.

Tullow Oil has said that the drill test at its Ngamia-1 well in Block 10BB in Kenya has provided proof of the commercial potential of oil reserves in the northern part of the country. The well tests produced 281 barrels per day.



EU President's statement on his meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam

President Jose Manuel Barroso issued a statement after his meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam on Thursday (April 18th). He said it had been a great pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister on his first official visit to Europe, the first official visit outside Africa since his election. It was a signal of the commitment of Ethiopia to its relationship with the European Union. President Barroso said he had a very open and friendly discussion on a number of bilateral issues. He had congratulated Ethiopia on its continued significant and broad based economic performance as well on its impressive progress in poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals' achievements. But, he added, he believed Ethiopia had potential to do more and better. Ultimately economic growth can only be sustained if it is achieved in an open society respectful of fundamental rights and also freedom, from freedom of expression to freedom of the press. He said the EU wanted to be a partner of Ethiopia in this process. The EU's relationship with Ethiopia today was a more mature relationship not just development assistance but also political cooperation that is what can be done together to tackle common challenges.

President Barroso noted that the EU and Ethiopia already had substantial and diversified economic and trade relations. The European Union was the most important trade partner for Ethiopia, with over 40% of Ethiopia's exports coming to Europe. It stood ready to support the Government in its long-term vision leading to growth and increased investment. In this respect it fully supported Ethiopia's efforts to join the World Trade Organization. Good results had been achieved in cooperation on food security and on basic service delivery. The EU looked forward to continuing this throughout the next European Development Fund which starts next year. This has an even stronger focus on health and Mr. Barroso announced that the European Union has already agreed to an additional allocation of € 30 million for maternal health.

President Barroso also commended Prime Minister Hailemariam for Ethiopia's important and positive role on a number of regional issues and crisis situations in the Horn of Africa and beyond. He said he was referring to Ethiopia's political and security efforts in Sudan, its engagement in Somalia and within regional organizations. As chair of the African Union, Ethiopia would represent Africa at the G20 summit and during the climate negotiations. These were key issues for the European Union where it shared a strong agenda with its African partners.

President Barroso also noted that he would be in Addis Ababa next week to participate in the meeting between the African Union Commission and the European Commission. He mentioned that preparations were already starting for the 2014 European Union-African Union Summit, and he was Ethiopia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hailemariam, would contribute to its success. He concluded by assuring the Prime Minister that the European Union would continue to support Ethiopia on its path towards further economic and social development.



South Sudan and Sudan once again agree to implement their peace agreements

Sudan's President Al-Bashir made a one-day visit to Juba on Friday (April 12th), his first visit since South Sudan's independence in 2011, meeting President Salva Kiir and other South Sudanese officials. The two presidents had one-to-one meetings and also presided over a joint ministerial meeting. President Al-Bashir described his visit as showing "the start of cooperation based on a normalization of relations between our two countries." The two presidents, who agreed to form a joint high level committee to work out the modalities for resolving the remaining outstanding issues between the two countries, made it clear they were aiming to implement the series of agreements reached last month in Ethiopia. They agreed to implement all aspects of the cooperation agreements, which both leaders signed without preconditions.

President Al-Bashir announced that he had ordered the reopening of Sudan's border with its southern neighbor. He said "I have instructed authorities and civil society to open up to their brothers in the Republic of South Sudan. The border trade has resumed. The citizens should now move freely. The government of Sudan will provide any support to our brothers and sisters in the state of South Sudan in order to build your new country." After the presidential meeting, President Al-Bashir added "We have resolved with Brother Salva Kiir in our meeting to work together and stick to the peace option and appropriately address issues through dialogue and consultations in the spirit of mutual understanding and accommodation, so as to promote harmony and good neighborliness, mutually beneficial cooperation and common development." President Al-Bashir also pledged that Sudan would seek stronger ties with South Sudan and he vowed to work closely with his counterpart to resolve outstanding issues including Abyei where the two sides have yet to establish temporary institutions or set up the promised referendum commission.

President Al-Bashir's visit to Juba and the agreements between the two presidents have been widely seen as an important gesture of improving relations between the two countries. Un Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, said he was encouraged by what he described as the "constructive discussion" between the two leaders on the implementation of the agreements they signed in Addis Ababa, on 27th September 2012, and urged both leaders to "maintain this positive momentum." The September cooperation agreements covered oil, citizenship rights, security issues, banking, and border trade and other areas. With reference to Abyei, the Secretary-General commended both Presidents "for their decision to continue their efforts to resolve the Abyei issue in accordance with the implementation matrix" and further urged the two leaders to resolve their differences regarding final settlement of the disputed region.

The Chairperson of the African Union, Dr. Dlamini-Zuma, also congratulated both President Al-Bashir and President Salva Kiir on what she described as a "fruitful summit meeting" in Juba. The meeting, she stressed, was a further "demonstration of their commitment to foster the normalization of relations between the two countries and promote the wellbeing of their peoples." Dr. Dlamini-Zuma particularly commended the two Presidents for upholding the letter and spirit of the Cooperation Agreement of 27th September 2012, and for reiterating their commitment towards the full implementation of all its nine components.



Her statement went on: "In this respect, she notes with satisfaction their decision to direct all joint mechanisms and committees to accelerate their efforts, in order to enhance the relations between the two countries in all fields of cooperation."

Dr. Dlamini-Zuma welcomed the commitment of the two presidents to resolve the issue of Abyei, in accordance with the Implementation Matrix, as well as their decision to establish a High Ministerial Joint Committee to be chaired by the two vice Presidents of both countries, in order to facilitate speedy decision-making regarding the enhancement of relations between the two countries. The African Union Commission, she stressed, would continue to support the two countries in the implementation of the agreements they have signed and towards the achievement of the overall objective of two viable States mutually supportive and at peace with one another.

The United States also welcomed what it called recent progress in the implementation of cooperation agreements signed last September between the two Sudans, notably the resumption of oil production by South Sudan on April 6th. The first oil for export from South Sudan reached Sudanese territory last weekend. The US embassy said in a statement after the presidential meeting that the agreements held "the promise of establishing mutually beneficial arrangements that promote the best interests of both peoples."



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South Sudan Economic Partners Forum meeting in Washington

The Governments of the United States and the Republic of South Sudan, in coordination with the European Union, Norway and the United Kingdom, met on Tuesday (April 16th) with representatives of more than forty other governments and international organizations at the South Sudan Economic Partners Forum in Washington, DC. The Forum marks the start of an enhanced partnership which is aimed to strengthen governance, political inclusiveness and sustainable development in South Sudan. It reviewed South Sudan's progress over the last 18 months which had been a period of considerable challenge. It welcomed the Government's fiscal and economic strategy, and agreed on the outlines of a 'compact' based on mutual commitment to reform and international engagement.

The Government of South Sudan highlighted the major macro-economic challenges the new nation has been facing and outlined its key reform priorities. The shutdown of oil production in January 2012 had sparked a severe fiscal crisis and in response the Government of South Sudan had undertaken to put in place fiscal and monetary policies to stabilize the macro-economy. It was currently negotiating an economic program with the International Monetary Fund. Partners emphasized the importance of this and of bringing those discussions to a rapid conclusion. Following the recent agreement between South Sudan and Sudan to resume oil production and open borders for trade, South Sudan has committed itself to put in place additional policy measures to establish macroeconomic stability as well as strengthen governance, guarantee political space and fundamental rights, enhance the management of public finances and natural resources, combat corruption, increase capacity for basic social services, and boost broad-based economic growth. As part of this process, the Government has emphasized its commitment to strengthen its macro-economic framework with support from the IMF and embark on an economic reform program in cooperation with international financial institutions.

Participants in the Forum welcomed the progress made in implementing last year's September 27th cooperation agreements between the two sides which, among other things, has led to the resumption of oil production in South Sudan and agreement to export through Sudan. Direct consultations between South Sudan's President Kiir and Sudan's President Bashir, which took place in Juba on April 12th, also produced further progress towards practical solutions for remaining outstanding issues and towards establishing mutually beneficial relations between the two peoples and states. Forum participants made it clear they strongly believed it was in the interests of both countries to seek constructive solutions to all their remaining differences and lay the foundations for building two peaceful, prosperous and viable states.

In face of the fragility of the progress made so far, the Government and its international partners agreed to renew and enhance their partnership in the spirit of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, to encourage a transition toward greater economic resilience. The Government, recognizing the effect of decades of violence and the continuing impact of conflict and insecurity, is committed to work to prevent hostilities in an integrated, inclusive and non-violent way.



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This requires a coordinated approach to political, security, humanitarian and development issues. All parties agreed that now more than ever it was important to sustain and accelerate the reform momentum. Partners made it clear the international community was committed to long-term engagement with South Sudan to support inclusive political governance, public accountability, effective social services and a vibrant private sector.

In response, South Sudan proposed a compact with international partners to encourage and build mutual commitments towards greater reform and aid effectiveness. Over the coming months, a broad range of stakeholders will develop a partnership compact for South Sudan, which will include mutually agreed policy benchmarks for the Government of South Sudan, matched with commitments from partners to build capacity and improve the effectiveness of aid. Once finalized, this will aim to provide an umbrella agreement for innovative financing from a range of international partners. This will include additional support for education and health sector salaries and the development of a new South Sudan Partnership Fund to support capacity building for good governance, investments in priority sectors and support for basic services. Several international partners indicated during the forum that they foresaw adding substantial new support to their contributions, raising these by up to US 300 million. Donors are providing some US 1.3 billion this year to South Sudan.

The Forum, displaying its conviction that a thriving private sector is critical to job creation, improved livelihoods and economic growth, also agreed to support the Government of South Sudan's proposed Private Sector Investment Conference to be held in Juba in the latter part of the year.



Eritrea's efforts to get sanctions lifted doesn't include UN Special Rapporteur access

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea, Ms. Beedwantee Keetharuth, has announced that she would be forced to visit neighboring countries to collect information about human rights in Eritrea following the continued refusal of the Eritrean government to allow her to enter the country. She made the announcement at the 53rd session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul, The Gambia. Ms. Keetharuth, following an ad-hoc meeting with the Eritrean delegation on the margins of the meeting, again urged "the Eritrean authorities to cooperate with my mandate, as required by the UN Human Rights Council".

In the absence of any such cooperation, Ms. Keetharuth says she will be visiting neighboring countries to hear the evidence of those who have fled from Eritrea. She said, "I will engage with all others concerned by human rights in Eritrea, including those who consider themselves to be victims of alleged human rights violations, human rights defenders and other civil society actors." The Special Rapporteur is due to present her first report on the human rights situation in Eritrea to the UN Human Rights Council in June this year and to the UN General Assembly.

Ms. Keetharuth welcomed the call for the Government of Eritrea to cooperate fully with international and regional mechanisms and to implement previous decisions by the African Commission made at a meeting of the NGO Forum that preceded the ACHPR session. She said "I reiterate my hope that the Eritrean Government will consider the mandate of the Special Rapporteur as an opportunity to start a fresh and constructive dialogue on human rights issues that have been raised by the international community and other stakeholders."

Ms. Keetharuth was appointed as Special Rapporteur to Eritrea to investigate the situation of human rights there in July last year. The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution for her appointment in response to reports of continued and widespread human right violations committed by the Eritrean authorities. Eritrea rejected the appointment of the Special Rapporteur as a politically motivated move and has persistently denied her access to the country and has refused to hold any discussions on the subject with her.

Despite this failure to respond to external criticism over human rights, President Isaias has been otherwise continuing efforts to try to gain support to persuade the UN Security Council to lift the sanctions it imposed on Eritrea following the evidence of its support for armed opposition and extremist groups in Somalia and throughout the region, and its failure to respond to demands to negotiate over its problems with Djibouti and to release the Djibouti prisoners of war it took in its incursions into Djibouti territory. Efforts by the Emir of Qatar to mediate between Djibouti and Eritrea have failed to make progress with President Isaias bizarrely refusing to acknowledge there was anything to mediate about. He reportedly made an unpublicized visit to Doha last week to be told that he should reactivate discussions with Djibouti and bring the whole episode to an end as soon as possible. Even in the interest of trying to persuade the Security Council of Eritrea's good faith, it remains unlikely that he will take this course. President Isaias has a very long record of failing to do what others think is sensible or desirable.



The latest allegation of Eritrean support for dissident and opposition movements has been in the Central African Republic. It was made by former CAR President Bozize recently ousted by the Seleka rebels. In an interview the ex-President claimed that "the arms used by the Seleka rebels during their final assault on the presidential palace were purchased from Eritrea and transited through Chad with the permission of President Deby". Eritrea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs indignantly denied the claim, describing it as "defamation that knows no bounds. The claim, however, received some traction because of Eritrea's previous record of providing arms to the Darfur rebels through Chad and to the SPLA in South Sudan before its independence, as well as its continuing efforts to support extremist groups in Somalia and opposition groups in Ethiopia including the ONLF and OLF rebels with arms and training.

Early this week, Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, and Lemane Gebreab, Presidential Adviser for Political Affairs, took a message from President Isaias to President Morsi in Cairo. The message apparently offered Eritrean backing to Egypt's claims to "historic rights" to the Nile water, as President Morsi was quoted subsequently by Egypt's State Information Service, as saying that he was looking forward to meet President Isaias and praising Eritrea's support for Egypt's "historic rights".

This was the claim that has led Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, and later Burundi to reject the 1959 and earlier colonial era Nile Water agreements between Egypt and Sudan. All these Nile Basin countries signed the Cooperative Framework Agreement in 2010 and 2011 to provide for reasonable and equitable utilization of the river. South Sudan has yet to sign but it has also made it clear it supports the Framework Agreement and is opposed to the 1959 Nile Water agreement between Sudan and Egypt. Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representative yesterday (April 18th) referred a Proclamation ratifying The Nile Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) to the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Standing Committee for discussion and approval. Signing of the agreement was originally left open for a year and then ratification was postponed while Egypt formed its new government. The Agreement enables the establishment of the Nile Basin Commission which will achieve "sustainable socioeconomic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources."

The Eritrean delegation visiting Cairo also held talks with Egypt's Foreign Minister Mohamed Amr on the problem of the trafficking of refugees, a majority from Eritrea through Egypt to Israel. There have been numerous reports by Eritrean human rights groups of refugees and asylum-seekers being tortured and held to ransom by Bedouin gangs in the Sinai desert. The UN Monitoring Group has also accused senior Eritrean officials of involvement in trafficking across the Eritrean border, and there have been credible reports of Eritrean government vehicles being used to transport those prepared to pay the initial payments of US 3,000 to 5,000 to the military in order to leave the country. Amnesty International recently called on all the countries along the trafficking route to crack down on kidnappings and abuses and act to protect the safety of refugees from Eritrea. In the last few years, over a quarter of a million refugees have left Eritrea, and it is estimated that at least 35,000 of them have ended up in Israel. Eritrean human rights organizations also believe at least 4,000 more have died in the Sinai desert trying to reach Israel, often after paying huge ransoms to traffickers.



There have been horrific stories of ‘organ harvesting’, torture and rape. Despite the dangers and the costs, thousands of Eritreans, desperate to escape their own country, continue to flee.

In their meeting this week, the two foreign ministers stressed the need to increase awareness of the problem. They agreed to increase their communications, strengthen their relationship, and work to encourage Egypt’s involvement in a variety of development projects in Nile Basin countries. Foreign Minister Amr said Egypt would like to promote trade with Eritrea, once the planned land bridge between Egypt and Sudan was fully established. This was a subject President Morsi also discussed with a Sudanese delegation led by the head of the Sudan Council of States, Adam Hamid Musa. The President said it was the responsibility of both Egypt and the Sudan to push ahead with the three proposed land routes to facilitate the movement of peoples and goods. He expressed a desire for continued communication between the Sudanese Council of States and the Egyptian Shura Council as both states work toward ‘convergence’ at legislative and civil levels. This, he said, would mark the beginning of wider regional collaboration.



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The second meeting of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa

The TANA High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was set up a year ago. It was an initiative of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies of Addis Ababa University and eminent African personalities, including the late Prime Minister Meles, with a view to contributing to the implementation of the AU Tripoli Declaration of August 2009 with its call for “African-centered solutions”. It is intended as an informal gathering of African decision makers, peace and security stakeholder groups and their constituencies, to provide for an open discussion of security issues and challenges.

African peace and security issues are normally discussed in formal meetings. The Tana Forum aims to provide opportunities to decision-making leaders and institutions to exchange experiences and insights on peace and security issues; to interact and consult with a broad-based African constituency as well as key global actors; to contribute to a substantive and open debate on key issues of strategic importance to Africa and its regional institutions; to communicate with and listen to the various components of peace and security and facilitate an inclusive dialogue among governments and African security stakeholder groups; and sensitize and mobilize other stakeholders, actors, and African opinion to Africa-owned solutions on peace and security. It is therefore intended to explore non-official solutions to key security issues and threats in Africa; build an African voice for both African and global security dialogues; contribute to the emerging body of Africa-made solutions for security challenges; build up the constituencies and ownership of these; and help to engage Africa in strategic and pro-active management of peace and security in the continent.

The advisory board of the Forum includes the former presidents of Nigeria (Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the Forum Chairperson), South Africa (Thabo Mbeki) and Burundi (Pierre Buyoya) as well as other prominent figures among them Professor Mahmood Mamdani, the Executive Director of Makerere Institute for Social Research, Dr. Funmi Olonisakin, Director, African Leadership Centre/Conflict Security and Development Group and Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, of Initiatives et Changement International. Professor Andreas Esheté, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister with the Rank of Minister in Ethiopia is the Chief Executive Officer of the Forum. The first meeting of the Tana High-Level Forum under the theme of “Managing Diversity and State Fragility” took place last year in Bahr Dar. This second meeting, taking place once again in Bahr Dar on the shores of Lake Tana, is meeting on the theme of “Security and Organized Crime in Africa”, on April 20th-21st.

Organized crime, understood in its broad sense, is made up of transnational, national, or local groups functioning within a structure and engaging in politically or economically motivated unlawful activity; and it is widely recognized that Africa faces threats to governance and security from increasing transnational organized criminal activities.



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The theme by definition encompasses a wide variety of types of organized crime affecting Africa including: the production, trafficking and sale of illegal drugs; the smuggling of unlawful migrants into Europe or elsewhere; people trafficking, including abduction, enslavement and organ trafficking; the illegal extraction and sale of “conflict minerals” including diamonds, gold and coltan; piracy; animal poaching; unlawful trade in arms; smuggling; trade in counterfeit products including medicines and cigarettes; money-laundering and financial extortion and deception; and extending to terrorism, extremism and regime destabilization. These can all fuel corruption and contribute to violence, though not necessarily political violence.

These activities stem from deep political and economic structural problems; they are not caused by political crises. There is no doubt of the need to respond to this serious and growing problem, and this also requires consideration of whether the standard policy responses prescribed by Europe and the U.S are in Africa’s interests or not. Does Africa have as much to fear from the effects of the “war on drugs” or from the “conflict minerals” campaign as from the drugs or minerals themselves.

The Forum discussions this weekend are likely to center around such issues as the root causes of transnational criminal activities in Africa; Africa’s response to global economic inequalities and the international demand for drugs, counterfeit goods, cheap labor, and human organs; ways to strengthen governance to minimize corruption caused organized crime; effectiveness of current policies and consideration of those based on prohibition, interdiction and policing or on legalization and regulation of the drugs trade; consideration of priorities for Africa’s law enforcement agencies and efforts; evaluation of whether European and American policies are valuable or detrimental to Africa’s interests; and discussion of how African states can develop and implement policies to serve the continent’s real interests.

The Tana High-Level Forum is now an annual occasion, and it can therefore contribute to continuous dialogue among top African leaders and representatives of a wide variety of stakeholders. It is already clear it can enable leaders to explore options for innovative and joint action in peace and security, with the design of its discussions allowing people to share views and experiences in an informal and independent manner, away from the constraints induced by diplomatic protocol and the constraints of the usual formal meetings.



Somalia/Somaliland agree to continue a dialogue at talks in Turkey

The President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mahamud, and the President of the unrecognized state of Somaliland, Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo, met on Saturday (April 13th) in Ankara. It was the first meeting between the two sides under Turkey's mediation but it continued the dialogue that began in February last year when representatives from Somaliland and Somalia met for the first round of bilateral talks in 20 years at Chevening House in June following the Somalia conference in London in February. Those discussions produced a resolution that called for clarifying "future relations". Subsequently, a week later in Dubai, Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo and the then head of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, agreed to continue bilateral talks. The talks, however, were put on hold while Somalia's new government was being organized following the end of the transitional period and Sheikh Sharif's replacement by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

The latest meeting, hosted by Government of Turkey, produced a seven point declaration which expressed joint commitment to the continuation of dialogue, endorsing the contents of the Chevening House declaration, agreed on June 21, 2012 and the Dubai statement signed on 28 June 2012. In the post-meeting communiqué, signed by Somalia's Interior Minister, Abdikarim Hussein Guled, and Somaliland's Foreign Minister, Dr. Mohamed Abdullahi Omar, it was noted that "the dialogue is between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Government of Somaliland. The International Community that is supporting this process will only provide facilitation when is needed." It also agreed to "encourage and facilitate international aid and development provided to Somaliland" and on the need to consolidate cooperation on security sector issues "through sharing intelligence training as well as scholarships for security sector professionals in order to become more effective in the fight against terrorism, extremism, piracy, illegal fishing, toxic dumping, maritime crime and serious crime." The communiqué added a proposal to meet again within three months in Istanbul as a date to be agreed later, and agreement to refrain from the use of any inflammatory language or other activities that might put the continuation of the dialogue at risk.

While in Turkey, the two leaders met with Turkish President Abdullah Gul and also had separate meetings with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who oversaw the penning of the "Ankara communiqué" and pledged Turkey's determination to assist the two sides to continue to hold a peaceful dialogue to overcome their differences. Before leaving Turkey, President Silanyo expressed his deep appreciation to Turkish officials for their determination to revive a process of dialogue between the governments of Somaliland and Somalia to end their two-decade-long dispute. In an interview with the Turkish paper, Zaman, he said "Turkey has played a very important role in trying to bring different sides together during the Somali conflict; they have consistently put an effort into establishing stability and promoting development in the region"



As the two sides prepared for this latest meeting, statements from officials on both sides showed they remained very far apart on the central issue of recognition or unity. Before leaving Hargeisa for Turkey, President Silanyo said "The points to be agreed upon are clear and we can all guess what they are. Somalia wants a reunion and for all of us to be part of Somalia, [but] Somaliland wants its independence to be recognized and agreed to by the world." Silanyo said that was where the difference lay, adding "we will not shut the door on the world; we will state our objectives, we will present and defend our case, and clearly state the position of our people." He has repeatedly stated that Somaliland is prepared to have a dialogue over its relationship with Somalia as long as Somaliland's independence is not up for discussion. He reiterated to a joint session of the Somaliland parliament on January 30th that there was no other option for Somaliland's except independence: "As I have said before, if it takes 100 years to reach it, the objective of Somaliland's independence is sacred, and I am confident we can overcome any challenge that we face together." Somaliland, of course, unilaterally declared independence from Somalia in 1991 after a long guerrilla struggle by the Somali National Movement against the regime of Siad Barre, but no other state has yet recognized it despite holding a referendum which overwhelmingly voted in favour of independence.

Somali Federal Government officials have also repeatedly stated since the September election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud that they believe in keeping Somalia united through mediation, suggesting that under the new federal system of government, Somaliland could be one of several semi-autonomous regions under the national government. Last month, speaking in Doha, President Mohamud said that "today Somalia is not united, but we want to unite it and we will unite it; we do not want to unite it using military might or diplomatic pressure; we want talks to take place between Somalis; we will unify it in a peaceful manner."



Ambassador Berhane met a delegation from France's National Defence Institute

Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, had discussions with a delegation from the French Institute of Advanced Studies for National Defence, (Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale, (IHEDN), on Monday (April 15th). The delegation had previously been in Uganda and Morocco prior to its arrival in Ethiopia. The Institute is an institution directly under the responsibility of the French Prime Minister, recruiting high level French and foreign officials from the military, public services and from civil society, with the objective of deepening their knowledge of defence, foreign policy and economic strategy. M. Foucher Michel, head of the delegation, which included senators, journalists, judges and diplomats from France, Brazil and Morocco, said that the Institute was an establishment created to encourage the linking of growth, development and security in any country's development efforts. It encouraged a platform of dialogue between the civilian and military components of society. M. Michel expressed the readiness of the Institute to assist the priorities of Ethiopia's regional policy during its tenure as chair of the African Union, and any efforts aimed at making the AU a more efficient regional and international actor with a strong and unified voice in the global political arena. He said that the Institute appreciated Ethiopia's role in ensuring peace, stability and security in the continent.

Ambassador Berhane, who noted the excellent relations that exist between Ethiopia and France on bilateral and regional issues, briefed the delegation on Ethiopia's double digit growth over the last nine years. This was the result of implementing the right mix of comprehensive, effective and carefully designed development policies based on lessons learnt from other countries. It was also a demonstration of the Government's commitment to ensure rapid and sustainable growth to lift its people from appalling poverty. He noted the recent rapid decline in the poverty index from 36% to less than 29%. Pointing out that Ethiopia is one of a very few nations expected to achieve almost all the MDGs, the State Minister emphasized the Government's determination to sustain its rapid growth and achieve its target of becoming a middle income country by 2025. The Government intended to sustain the effective utilization of the country's material and human resources through continuous improvement in the performance framework. He noted the attractive investment opportunities available in Ethiopia, and encouraged France to come up with more innovative means of supporting its investors to engage more in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. He mentioned the efforts to include the French language in school systems with a view to further consolidate people-to-people relations.

Ambassador Berhane pointed out that Africa was in the process of a renaissance and was rapidly becoming a coherent political and economic bloc with committed and scholarly leaders. He noted the growing attention that the international community was finally giving to Africa, and in this regard, the State Minister expressed appreciation of the supportive role of France and its institutions in cooperation with Ethiopia and with Africa as a whole on economic and security issues of international concern, including terrorism and climate change.



In this context, he also referred to Ethiopia's positive role in the region and its efforts to support the removal of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and its efforts, with partners, to encourage Sudan and South Sudan to resolve their outstanding issues peacefully. On Eritrea, Ambassador Berhane noted the continuing refusal of the Eritrean regime' to respond to Ethiopia's often-stated readiness to normalize relations. He stressed that the Eritrean regime continued its destabilizing activities in the region and welcomed any support for encouraging the implementation of the guidelines on the sanctions imposed on Eritrea by the UN Security Council.

Ambassador Berhane also briefed the delegation on Ethiopia's objectives for its Chairmanship of the African Union. These included include working closely with the AU Commission to create suitable conditions to ensure enduring peace and security in the continent and to sustain Africa's growth and development. Among other aims were facilitating and contributing to crafting a workable post-2015 development agenda for Africa; encouraging good governance practices (including democratic elections and their peaceful management); and making sure that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of OAU/AU would provide a proper assessment of previous achievements and suitable future directions for the continent as well as strengthening Africa's relations with other international actors.

Responding to questions, the State Minister explained Ethiopia's desire for a win-win approach on reasonable and equitable use of the Nile waters so all the riparian countries could benefit equally. He believed the lower riparian states were beginning see the benefit of this approach. The State Minister said Ethiopia viewed France's intervention in Mali as a reasonable response to calls by the Mali government and to the UN's description of the situation there as a threat to regional and international peace and stability. He appreciated the efforts to make AFISMA take the lead in managing the situation in Mali.



About

A Week in the Horn, established in 2007, is a weekly online publication dedicated to regional developments in the Horn of Africa. Its aim is to promote good will and brotherly relations between states in the region by highlighting events and publicizing news stories. It features detailed commentary, analysis as well as intelligent discussion of weekly developments throughout the region.

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