# A WEEK IN THE HORN OF AFRICA
## 27th July 2012



### The UN Monitoring Group Reports on Eritrea….

The latest UN Monitoring Group reports were presented to the UN Security Council this week after being extensively, if not altogether accurately, leaked last week. In fact, the Monitoring Group actually presented two reports, one focusing on Eritrea, the other on Somalia.

On Eritrea, the Monitoring Group suggests that the "Eritrean authorities appear to have been responding to international pressure to curb the involvement of Eritrea in activities that threaten international peace and security, notably support for the Somali extremist group, Harakaat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidiin, commonly known as Al-Shabaab" and notes that this change has been occurring since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1907 (2009). It believes this change can be attributed to three factors: growing friction between the authorities in Asmara and Al-Shabaab's leadership; Al-Shabaab's declining military fortunes; and increased international scrutiny which has made direct support to Al-Shabaab and others much riskier than previously.

At the same time the report makes it quite clear that in most other respects Eritrea "has failed to comply with Security Council resolutions and remains a destabilizing influence throughout much of the region." The report states categorically: "the Monitoring Group has confirmed that Eritrea continues to violate resolutions 1844 (2008) and 1907 (2009) by deploying Ethiopian armed opposition groups via Somali territory."

It details evidence of Eritrean support to the ONLF, OLF, the Tigrayan People's Democratic Movement (TPDM), Ginbot 7 and ARDUF, and says Eritrea "hosts the remnants of other Ethiopian opposition groups, such as Arbengnoch, Debub-Hizboch, and Beni Shangul". This includes details, for example, of the attempt in October last year, by a combined group of fighters from the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to cross into Ethiopia from Somalia. They were intercepted in central Somalia. The members of both groups had been hosted and trained in Eritrea prior to their deployment, and survivors provided details of their training in Eritrea "consistent with the accounts of other ONLF fighters known to have been trained there". The report considers that there may now be very few ONLF fighters left in Eritrea and notes that there are reports that the relationship between Asmara and ONLF has become increasingly strained. It suggests this may be due to arguments over questions of strategy and partly because of the possibility of dialogue between the Government of Ethiopia and remaining ONLF leaders.

The report notes the attack by the members of the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) in January and the killing of five tourists at Erta'Ale. The report details considerable evidence of the training of ARDUF fighters by Eritrean officers, providing names and training specialties. "The Monitoring Group has confirmed that Eritrea continues to host, train and support ARDUF, and that some recent ARDUF trainees may have been involved in the Erta'Ale incident." Eritrean support to the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (Demhit) mainly based out of Harena in western Eritrea is also outlined, and the report notes that when Ethiopian forces raided locations in Eritrea in mid-April 2012, they specifically targeted main Demhit bases, including Harena.

The report goes into considerable detail over the way Eritrean authorities also continue to violate the arms embargo through smuggling of weapons and ammunition for commercial sale through Sudan, an activity "supervised by senior military officials". This goes hand in hand with a much more lucrative activity "human trafficking to Sudan and the Sinai. The same criminal networks smuggle Eritrean migrants and Eritrean weapons, often in the same vehicles. Once in the Sudan or the Sinai, Eritrean migrants are routinely taken hostage, tortured, raped or killed, while their kidnappers demand an average of $30,000 to $40,000 ransom — often negotiated and paid through Eritrean mediators." The report also notes that the Eritrean authorities "continue to rely heavily on extraterritorial taxation among Eritrean diaspora communities to generate hard currency" and confirms that "collection of such taxes routinely involves threats, harassment and intimidation against the individual concerned or relatives in Eritrea."

The report says another increasingly important source of revenue is gold production from mines in western Eritrea and notes that as the budget and expenditure of Eritrea are not open to public scrutiny, it's difficult to ensure that mining revenues are not spent to finance violations of resolution 1907 (2009) or provide support to armed opposition groups throughout the region. Surprisingly, the report makes no mention of the extensive allegations of forced, or even 'slave' labour in the mining sector.

It does, however, provide details of the evidence that Eritrea, in spite of repeated denials, continues to hold several Djibouti prisoners of war, including the information provided by two who escaped in September last year: "The conduct of the Eritrean authorities in this regard constitutes a grave violation of Security Council resolutions 1862 (2009) and 1907 (2009), and raises serious doubts about Eritrea's commitment to the Qatari-led mediation process to normalize relations between [Eritrea and Djibouti]".

It is worth noting that the Monitoring Group pays a lot of attention to ensuring that its evidentiary standards and verification processes are of a sufficiently high standard. It collects information on events and topics from multiple sources, where possible, and from sources with first-hand knowledge of events. It takes care to identify patterns of information and compares existing knowledge with new information, factoring in available expertise and judgment on credibility of information and of the reliability of sources. It makes every effort to obtain physical, photographic, video and/or documentary evidence in support of the information collected. It also emphasizes that at no time does it offer payment or any other inducements in exchange for testimony or evidence. The result of all this is that the Monitoring Group's reports appear well up to serious academic standards of accuracy and content. This is something in which it appears to differ very markedly from some other organizations that claim to report on certain alleged aspects of situations and realities in the region without providing any serious effort to assess the credibility of their sources.

The report on Eritrea concludes by making several recommendations. It suggests the Security Council consider getting briefings from the Governments of Egypt, Eritrea, Israel and the Sudan on the issue of arms and human trafficking between the four countries. It recommends that the Security Council consider renewing its decision that Eritrea should cease using extortion, threats of violence, fraud and other illicit means to collect taxes outside Eritrea. It also calls for the Government of Eritrea either to voluntarily subscribe to a transparent framework for management of its mining revenues, or Member States should impose mandatory disclosure requirements on the mining companies. Specifically, with reference to Security Council resolution 1862 (2009) it calls on the Government of Eritrea to provide immediately all available information relating to the status of Djiboutian prisoners of war that it holds.

## …and on Somalia…..

In its much longer report on Somalia the Monitoring Group provides a whole series of detailed appendices covering the misappropriation of financial resources in the public sector, of corruption over the issuing of passports and of currency. It looks in detail at Al-Shabaab's operations and activities, and at its capacities, as well as at piracy and kidnapping and more generally at other violations of the arms embargo, the activities of private security organizations, obstruction of humanitarian assistance and violations of international humanitarian law. In its recommendations for the Security Council the Monitoring Group suggests that the planned Joint Financial Management Board should be established as quickly as possible as a condition for future assistance to the Transitional Federal Government from its international partners; that the Governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates should be reminded of their obligations to take measures to prevent the importation of charcoal from Somalia; and that Al-Shabaab affiliate groups in East Africa, notably the Muslim Youth Centre/Al Hijra and the Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre, be the subject of targeted measures.

On piracy the Monitoring Group recommends that known pirates and their associates should be designated for targeted measures; that the Security Council should consider establishing a specialized investigative group of experts to collect information, gather evidence and record testimonies relating to acts of Somali piracy, and provide for identification of pirate leaders, financiers, negotiators, facilitators, support networks and beneficiaries. It should also call upon Governments, international organizations and national law enforcement agencies to exchange evidence and information with a view to the arrest and prosecution of senior pirate leaders and their associates. The Council should consider options for the establishment of an international regulatory authority to regulate and monitor private maritime security companies, and it should designate Sterling Corporate Services, Australian African Global Investments and their affiliates immediately.

The Monitoring Group says that the governments of South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Uganda and Ethiopia should take all necessary steps to prevent the use of their ports and airports for activities in connection with technical assistance, training, financial and other aid for military activities in Somalia in violation of Security Council resolutions 733 (1992), 1425 (2002) and 1844 (2008). In addition the Security Council should consider expanding the mandate of AMISOM to include enforcement of the arms embargo, and request the United Nations, in coordination with the Monitoring Group, to work with the African Union to develop a specialized unit of an appropriate size to enforce the arms embargo at ports, airports and border posts. The Monitoring Group calls upon the Transitional Federal Government to ensure greater protection for civilians, particularly women and girls, to immediately sign, ratify and enforce the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all autonomous authorities in Somalia should also align themselves with international standards and refrain from the recruitment of anyone under the age of 18 into their security forces.

## ….the UN Security Council considers the reports

The Security Council meeting on Tuesday (24th July) was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Mahiga and by Ambassador Puri of India, Chairman of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee. The Council welcomed some of the recent progress on the Roadmap and military gains by AMISOM and Transitional Federal Government forces in Somalia. It paid tribute to the sacrifices and bravery shown by AMISOM. It welcomed some recent developments to end the transition, including the selection of the 825 members of the National Constituent Assembly, though it expressed serious concern that deadlines including appointment of members of the Somali Parliament continued to be missed. The members of the Council reiterated that the transition must end on 20th August. It urged the Transitional Federal Institutions and the Roadmap Signatories to redouble efforts to deliver on their commitments.

The Security Council underlined the best way to deliver peace, security and economic development to the people of Somalia was through accountable, representative institutions, delivered through a transparent process. It expressed serious concern at the reports on financial transparency in Somalia and called for the end to misappropriation of funds. The Council insisted on the primary importance of the transition process, and underlined its resolve to take action against individuals and entities threatening the peace, security, and stability of Somalia, before or after the August transition deadline. It also underlined the importance of regional cooperation and dialogue for promoting durable peace and stability in Somalia. The Council encouraged all Somalis to engage constructively in the political process and move towards a more peaceful and stable Somalia and called upon the Principals to seize the opportunity of the coming weeks to realize the ambitions of the Somali people for peace and prosperity through a transparent transition to accountable governance.

The Security Council also unanimously passed Resolution 2060 (2012) extending the mandate of the group monitoring sanctions imposed on Somalia and Eritrea, and explicitly continuing the targeting of those who obstruct the processes, while relaxing funding and equipment restrictions that could negatively affect the delivery of humanitarian aid. The resolution reaffirmed all previous resolutions imposing sanctions against those engaging in or supporting acts that threatened Somalia's peace, security, or stability, the Djibouti Peace Agreement of 18th August 2008, the political process, the Transitional Federal Institutions and their post-transition successors, or AMISOM. The Council noted that this included engaging in or providing support for the direct or indirect export of charcoal from Somalia; engaging in non-local commerce via Al-Shabaab-controlled ports, or misappropriating financial resources which undermine the ability of the Transitional Federal Institutions and its successors to fulfil their obligations.

The resolution moderated the embargoes to allow weapons and military equipment, and the provision of assistance, for use by the United Nations Political Office in Somalia and excluded non-lethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use. The Council decided that financial restrictions imposed by resolution 1844 (2008) should not apply to funding for delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance, but it condemned the politicization, misuse or misappropriation of humanitarian aid, demanding that all parties ensure full, safe and unhindered access for the timely delivery of aid to persons in need across Somalia. The mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group was also renewed until 25th August 2013.

## The Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

At the invitation of the Chinese Government, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Desalegn attended the fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, held from 19th to 20th July. The Forum, organized under the theme "Build on past achievements and open up new prospects for the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership," brought together Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers and Ministers for

Foreign Economic Cooperation from China and from 50 African countries, as well as representatives from the African Union. The FOCAC is a collective consultation and dialogue mechanism between China and African countries launched in 2000; and its next ministerial conference is scheduled to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2015.

Chinese President Hu Jintao, welcoming participants, said China and Africa had enhanced all-round friendly political relations featuring mutual respect and trust and enjoyed closer ties of solidarity and coordination in international affairs. He said China-Africa cooperation should continue to promote multilateralism and democratization in international relations and that the two sides should work together to do justice towards increased representation for African countries in the UN Security Council. China and Africa should also continue to work to call upon the international community to fulfill its pledges of assistance and debt relief to help African countries meet the MDGs and enhance sustainable development.

During the Forum China pledged to expand cooperation in investment and financing to support sustainable development in Africa with a **US$20 billion credit line** to assist African countries; continue to increase assistance to Africa to bring about the benefits of development, building more agricultural technology demonstration centres, training 30,000 personnel, offering 18,000 government scholarships, and building cultural and vocational skills training facilities; establish a partnership with Africa on transnational and trans-regional infrastructural development and encourage established Chinese companies and financial institutions to take part in this; enhance people-to-people friendship; and promote peace and stability in Africa, launching the "**Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security**," deepening cooperation with the AU and African countries in peace and security issues and providing financial support for AU peace-keeping missions and the development of the African Standby Force.

In his address to the Forum, Ato Hailemariam emphasized Ethiopia's view that China and Africa should maintain high-level exchanges and dialogue between leaders, legislatures, political parties and local government with a view to expanding strategic consensus and cooperation. In peace and security, while Africa must keep ownership and the leading role with African countries and regional organizations, China's cooperation in capacity building, preventive diplomacy, peace keeping operations, and counter piracy activities had positively contributed and should be enhanced. He said China-Africa cooperation should continue to promote multilateralism and democratization in international relations. The two sides should work together for **increased representation of African countries in the Security Council** and continue to work together to call upon the international community to fulfill its pledges of assistance and debt relief to help African countries meet the MDGs and enhance sustainable development in the continent.

The Deputy Prime Minister said strengthening economic cooperation was pivotal to China and Africa relations. Economic cooperation in the sectors indicated in the Beijing Action plan - agriculture, investment, trade, infrastructure, energy and natural resources, information, communication, transport and tourism – would bring benefit to both parties and provide new opportunities and prospects to be exploited by both sides. He applauded cooperation in human resource development, science and technology, health and climate change, and noted that China would help Africa elevate the skills and knowledge of its workforce. He said that Ethiopia considered FOCAC an important mechanism for the development of Africa. It counted China as a close friend and strategic partner and would continue to strengthen the relationship through bilateral and multilateral programmes offering mutual benefit and solidarity.

During the Forum, Ato Hailemariam had sideline bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of China, discussing bilateral cooperation, regional and international issues; with the Deputy Director of the Department of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Guandong province about investment opportunities and possible cooperation to attract investors to Ethiopia; and with the President of Touch Road from Shanghai on possible cooperation in the promotion of trade and investment.

## The Fruit and Vegetable Investment Summit

Last week, Ethiopia Fruit and Vegetable Investment Summit on 19th July attracted over 400 participants including senior government officials, ambassadors, major producers, potential buyers, experts in the field and various scholars. Ambassador Hans Blankenberg of the Netherlands welcomed participants and made a keynote address which underlined that Ethiopia's 'green sector' had much to offer. Indeed, the country, he said, was providing something of a brand for the concept of a 'green economy'. If a small country in a temperate zone like the Netherlands could become the second largest fruit supplier in the European market, he said, Ethiopia with its huge size and favourable weather conditions could benefit even more from the sector. Ambassador Blankenberg added that having the potential wasn't of course enough. It was also a necessity to use resources optimally, and he promised his country's readiness to share its technical knowledge of production and marketing of products in the European Market with Ethiopia.

The Minister of Agriculture, Tefera Deribew, emphasized that Ethiopia had adopted an Agricultural Development Led Industrialization policy to boost small-holder farmers' production, to sustain consumption, and to produce products for industrialization. The Minister stated that the Government had a vision that Ethiopia could become the leading exporter of horticulture products in Africa in the shortest possible time. He said Ethiopia has comparative and competitive advantages in the sector because of its varied agro-climatic endowments could provide ideal growing conditions for virtually all types of fruit and vegetables. He underlined the fact that the country also had the asset of a young, large, and low-cost pool of labour. Equally, produce could be easily and cheaply transported to the main markets of the European Union and the Middle East. The Minister also stressed that the Government was prepared to use certain strategies to boost the prospects of the sector. These included identifying naturally suitable land with access to proper infrastructure for development of production corridors, and potential out-growers to augment commercial estates, providing both labour and production; facilitating the construction of cold storage utilities, roads and infrastructure in development corridors; and improving the current limitations of sea transport by developing the ownership of essential facilities, including refrigerated containers, through the Government's logistics enterprise.

The first session of the Summit featured buyers from Europe and the Middle East who were already interested in buying Ethiopian produce. Presenters eated on the requirements of the markets and how aspiring Ethiopian exporters could manage to penetrate them. The session also involved a presentation of the Government's specific development plans and incentives for investors operating in the sector. The second session was designed to maximize experience-sharing and interaction with leading investors in the sector as well as the support and services of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association. In the afternoon, a two-hour Horticulture Marketplace introduced investors to all the service providers required to succeed in the fruit and vegetables sector in Ethiopia. It featured financing agents, equipment suppliers, providers of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, transport and logistics companies, regional investment bureaux, and development agencies working to support the sector. The final discussion focused on the way forward in the effort to develop the fruit and vegetable sector in Ethiopia under the framework of a public-private partnership.

## Former US Ambassador sees a brighter future for Africa in Ethiopia

The Vice-President for International Affairs at Texas Tech University and a former U.S Ambassador to Ethiopia and to Guinea, Ambassador Tibor Nagy Jr. was recently in Ethiopia for a visit with a group representing seven US universities. Ambassador Nagy came out to Ethiopia as ambassador in 1999, and now following this visit, his first for four years, he summed up his impressions in an article entitled "Finally - A brighter future ahead for Africa", published in LubbockOnline. Ambassador Nagy makes it clear that Ethiopia, once "the poster child of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse now presents a promise of a much brighter future." And a more developed, prosperous, peaceful and stable Ethiopia, he says, means benefits beyond its borders "for the region, the continent and even America."
He details the changes from his last visit describing Addis Ababa now transformed to a bustling, modern metropolis of four million people with new business towers, hotels and shopping centres sprouting everywhere. Infrastructure has undergone a huge upgrade, with "nightmarish dirt roads" now mostly paved, and wireless phone service available in most parts of the country, even in the remote highlands. Ambassador Nagy sees the most dramatic change as the overwhelming number of young people; everyone, he says, seems to be under 30. Importantly, however, Ethiopia is taking steps to make sure its youthful population represents a way toward a more stable and prosperous future, rather than potential for violent instability, unemployment, increased poverty or a source for international terrorism. He stresses that there can be no "silver bullet" for magically transforming a nation from undeveloped to developed, but Ethiopia, he says, is doing the next best thing, that is maximizing the education of its youthful population. He is deeply impressed by the country's education policy. He says "when I arrived in Ethiopia as U.S. ambassador in 1999, the literacy numbers were abysmal, especially for girls". Thanks to a national policy that first promoted primary and then secondary education "current estimates are more than 50 percent of women and two thirds of men can now read and write." He also praises the ambitious campaign "to build from scratch a network of universities across the nation to provide the necessary skills for its young people to help build a new Ethiopia looking toward future prosperity rather than past misery. Ten years ago, Ethiopia had three national universities, now it has 31!" He also notes that the fact that **Ethiopia spends 27 percent of the national budget on education is "an astounding figure for any country, not just in Africa**."

Ambassador Nagy goes on to ask what this might mean for Americans and lists a number of advantages. Firstly, he says Ethiopia is on its way out of the poverty trap, and with repeated double digit economic growth for several years "we're approaching the time when Ethiopia will be food secure, no longer requiring international assistance every few years". Secondly, Ethiopia's higher education expansion programme offers great opportunities for the U.S. which still has the best university system in the world. Ethiopia, he points out, is graduating tens of thousands with bachelor's degrees, but it needs masters' and PhD degree holders to serve as faculty members. U.S. universities can help by establishing partnerships with Ethiopian universities to colate on degree programmes, faculty training, curriculum design, academic management and other areas; all programmes that attract funding from international donors. Ambassador Nagy notes that when he was serving in Africa as a U.S. diplomat he found that the most pro-American people were those who either spent time as university students in America or who had been in contact with U.S. academics in their own countries. He adds that in this new globalized world, "the U.S. can use as many friends as possible."

His final point is that a better educated and more prosperous Ethiopia will help stabilize the East African region, which he describes as one of the world's most conflict prone regions. It will be able to serve as a **development model** for other impoverished African countries. Better education and job opportunities can dramatically reduce the lure of international terrorism and persuade people to stay in their own countries instead of feeling forced to migrate elsewhere. Prosperity in Africa will increase the opportunities for selling more U.S. products rather than just giving assistance. He says "during my more than 20 years of working in Africa, I consistently witnessed Africa "developing" but never quite getting to “developed.” However “my recent visit to Ethiopia has provided a jolt of unbridled optimism.” Each decade since the 60s was going to be Africa’s decade but none ever made it. However “perhaps we’re finally there, with the model for success coming from sub-Saharan Africa’s oldest country.”

## The Olympic Games 2012 opens in London

The Olympic Games 2012, being held in London, will be formally opened later today, Friday 27th July, and this, the greatest of all world athletic occasions, will continue for the next two weeks. The Opening Ceremony takes place at 9 pm local time this evening, under the title of "The Isles of Wonder", and Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh will open the Games officially. During the parade of athletes, Greece, as is customary, will lead, followed by other countries in alphabetical order, with the host nation, Great Britain, at the end. 80,000 spectators are expected at the Olympic Stadium and millions more will watch on television.

Every country in the world participates, or tries to participate, in the Olympic Games. Somalia, despite being wracked by years of conflict and extremist violence, has managed to send a team. Ethiopia is sending a team of 35 including several former gold medallists, among them Kenenissa Bekele, with gold medals in the 5,000 and 10,000 metres in 2008 and holding World and Olympic records in both distances; Tirunesh Dibeba, winner of gold medals in the women’s 5,000 and 10,000 metres in Beijing in 2008; and Meseret Defar, 5,000 metre gold medalist in 2004. Ethiopian athletes are also competing in a number of events for the first time including shorter distance running and swimming.

Ethiopia’s greatest ever long-distant runner, Haile Gebreselassie, is not participating. Haile who won Olympic gold medals for the 10,000 metres in 1996 and 2000 and who has held world records for 5,000, 10,000, half-marathon and marathon distances in a career spanning twenty years, describes running in the Olympics as more than just a race. An Olympic win is what people remember, he says, and “it gives you the power to believe in something better: it is hope. When, as a child in Ethiopia, I ‘stole’ my family’s radio to listen to the Olympic 10,000 metres final in a field near our house – my father did not allow it to be used for anything but the news and weather – and listened to Miruts Yifter win his gold medal in 1980, I knew I wanted to be a great runner.”

Running is a part of life for most Ethiopians, he says. “I used to run six miles to school and six miles home, unless it was during the rainy season when our bridge would be flooded: then it became 7½ miles each way. Running provides rhythm to our day and comes as naturally as eating.” At the same time, he adds, the most important things needed to become a great athlete are “self-belief, discipline, commitment and hard work.” Haile points out that “We have great running role models in Ethiopia – Abebe Bikila, Mamo Wolde, Miruts Yifter – and Ethiopians have the freedom to dream and to follow them. Every runner in Ethiopia dreams of being an Olympic champion like them.” Or indeed like Haile Gebreselassie himself.

The opening ceremony is a great occasion for novice or veteran competitors alike. “When you first start competing, you compete only for yourself. When you become successful, you compete for others. You have a responsibility to invest back into your country. That is the only way that your country will make itself great.”
We would like to take this opportunity to wish all those competing for Ethiopia every success.

## Human Rights Watch can’t even be bothered to get Meles Zenawi’s position right

Examples of poor research and manipulation of facts, deliberate or otherwise, can all-too-often be seen in the work of international advocacy organizations which prefer invention to accuracy, fiction to fact. One recent example can be seen in a piece produced by Ben Rawlence, senior researcher on Africa for Human Rights Watch (HRW), a few days ago. (Why are Ethiopian eyes on Brussels? 19.7.2012). This was an article clearly intended to try to influence the European Union to cut aid to Ethiopia by making allegations about what Mr. Rawlence calls the "abusive policies being pursued by Ethiopia's ailing president."

It's a carefully crafted example of Human Rights Watch's poor methodology, its techniques of deliberately misusing facts or misinterpreting them to suit its own claims, and of inventing elements in common with the worst of the journalistic exaggerations of the tabloid press. To start with the first line of the article, Meles, who is actually recovering not ailing, is not Ethiopia's president but its Prime Minister.

This rather obvious error sets the tone and is symptomatic of Mr. Rawlence's casual, indeed, cavalier approach to both accuracy and evidence. He claims, for example, that two Swedish journalists convicted in December 2011 were jailed for terrorist-related offences. That's only partially true. They were convicted for crossing into Ethiopia illegally, as well as for travelling with an armed group of the Ogaden National Liberation Front, a terrorist organization, as indeed they admitted. According to their own testimony, the two were not actually attempting "to report on the closed Ogaden region where rights abuses against the indigenous Somali population are rampant": they themselves said they were trying to investigate the activities of a Swedish oil company.

It might be added that "the Ogaden region", is not closed; it is only HRW quoting members of the Eritrean-backed Ogaden National Liberation Front, a terrorist organization, which claims "rampant" human rights abuses; the regional state government, actually freely elected by the "indigenous Somali population" currently presides over substantial development in the region and operates highly successful policies dealing with last year's drought; the Ethiopian government is actively engaged in discussions with the ONLF to encourage it to lay down its arms as one major faction did last year, and another group, the United Western Somali Liberation Front, did a year earlier. None of these are details that Mr. Rawlence sees fit to mention. Nor is he prepared to itemize from where he and HRW collect their information, neglecting to mention that it is actually from outside the country and in many, if not all, cases from members and supporters of the ONLF.

Mr. Rawlence goes on to refer to villagization in Gambella, repeating an earlier Human Rights Watch claim that "the government has already removed thousands of indigenous people from their homes against their will and re-settled them in new areas which are often infertile and lack schools and clinics." This again is simply not true, and Mr. Rawlence deliberately neglects to mention that a whole series of investigations by other organizations have failed to find any of the "evidence" that Human Rights Watch has claimed. Investigations by the Donor Assistance Group, as well as repeated visits by embassies including several members of the European Community, the UK and the US, and by a raft of NGOs working in the area have all failed to substantiate Human Rights Watch claims – which are as usual drawn largely, if not exclusively, from people outside the country, members of externally-based armed opposition movements and other dissidents.

The same problems arise over Human Rights Watch claims over the sugar project in the Omo Valley. Mr. Rawlence says this made "no pretence of consulting local indigenous communities before removing people from their land". This again is simply untrue as is the HRW claim that the sugar plantations "are being developed without the environmental and social impact assessments that are required by Ethiopian law." Environmental and social impact studies have been carried out for the sugar developments, just as they have for the Gilgel Gibe III dam, another project criticized by HRW, and for its impact on the Lower Omo Valley. Despite Mr. Rawlence's attempts at sarcasm, the Federal Government of Ethiopia is fully aware of its own constitution, and of the African Charter, the UN Declaration of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and similar declarations to which it is signed up, and of the fact that people, indigenous or otherwise, should not be displaced without free, prior and informed consent.

In fact, in all these cases, despite HRW's allegations, the government, and contractors where appropriate, have carried out environmental and social impact studies; they have consulted the local populations; they have removed no one against their will; and they have provided facilities at the new sites including roads, schools, clinics and other facilities, though admittedly there have been some delays in certain areas. The developments include substantial infrastructural improvements to the areas involved as well as extensive job creation and other benefits. It might also be noted that people who choose to move also have the right to return to their previous home areas at any stage over the following three years.

Mr. Rawlence, and Human Rights Watch, do not see fit to mention any of this or bother to note the extensive and very detailed refutations that have been made of Human Rights Watch's allegations. They have, in fact, made no effort to address the evidence that is actually visible and available on the ground.

Mr. Rawlence makes no effort to try and reply to the detailed criticisms of HRW's methodology that have been repeatedly made in recent years, in some cases by HRW's own members including indeed its own Chairman Emeritus. Human Rights Watch, regrettably, has a habit of never admitting to errors however gross or obvious, or of apologizing for mistakes however serious the effect might be on the people it claims to be trying to assist. To paraphrase Mr. Rawlence, there are many in Ethiopia who wish that Brussels was paying more attention to what Human Rights Watch is up to with its so-called reporting.

## News and Views

### Federal Police Commissioner General's Press Conference

The Ethiopian Federal Police Commission announced on Wednesday 25th July, that it had successfully foiled a series of illegal activities under the disguise of religion which posed threats to the peace and national security of the country. A few extremist elements had been trying to incite violence in some mosques in Addis Ababa. The Commission said it had arrested several individuals who had been intending to carry out acts of terrorism both in Addis Ababa and in some regional areas under the disguise of religion. In a press briefing, Commissioner General Workneh Gebeyehu explained that the police operation had been designed to isolate the extremists from the Muslim community and "they had been detained according to the issue of arrest warrants by the court.," He added that there had been "no loss of life or heavy damage to property" in the operation to put an end to these illegal activities. He also stated that there was evidence to show the involvement of foreign elements in these activities. The Commissioner General said the suspects would be presented to court as soon as the police investigation had been finalized. He emphasized that the Federal Police had been following these illegal acts with caution and responsibility. He called on the public to continue its support for the police in the prevention of crime.

### Somalia's National Constituent Assembly meets

The meeting of the Somali National Constituent Assembly started on Wednesday 25th July, at the meeting hall of the former police academy in Mogadishu. It is expected to last for nine days. The opening session, originally expected on Monday [23rd] and then Tuesday, was delayed as some of the 825 members of the Assembly had difficulties in reaching Mogadishu. In a press release issued on Tuesday, Ambassador Mahiga, the UN Special Envoy to Somalia and Head of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), hailed the completion of the selection process. "It is encouraging to see that progress is being made," he said, adding that "[This] marks significant progress towards ending the transition and providing the new political institutions for a stable and functional state in Somalia, after 21 years of political and civil strife." The National Constituent Assembly is considering the draft of the provisional constitution which will later be ratified in a national referendum. After the Assembly concludes its deliberation, the new Parliament being chosen by the Traditional Elders will carry out elections for the Speaker and his deputies and on 20th August for the position of President, bringing the transitional process to an end. Welcoming the members of the Assembly, TFG President Sheikh Sharif described the gathering as a historic moment in the history of Somalia. "I would like to congratulate all Somalis on this success at this crucial time," he said. "We are here today to approve the constitution, which means the foundation of our country's governance is being laid down". Present at the opening in addition to President Sheikh Sharif were Prime Minister Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Speaker Sharif Hassan, Ambassador Mahiga and representatives from IGAD, the African Union, the Arab League and all diplomatic missions in Mogadishu.

## Sudan/South Sudan talks continue

The South Sudan/Sudan talks mediated by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) continued this week, dealing with the issue of oil. Sudan's Defence Minister, Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein was in Khartoum at the beginning of the week for consultations with President Omer Al-Bashir. On his return to Addis Ababa, the Minister said the President had provided him with observations and opinions which would help the negotiating teams. At the beginning of the week, South Sudan's chief negotiator, Pagan Amum, told reporters in Addis Ababa that Juba had tabled a "last offer" on Sunday. The proposals included an offer to wipe out debts worth more than US$4.9 billion, as well raising its compensation package from a US$2.6 billion offer made earlier this year. Amum said South Sudan would also be prepared to resume exports of oil through Sudan immediately in return for agreement over fair and reasonable transportation fees; South Sudan was willing to pay up to US$9.10 a barrel for premium quality oil or US$7.26 per barrel for poorer quality oil transit fees. Talks on the issue of oil fees resumed on Thursday [26th July]. Earlier, Sudan spokesman Dr. Mutrif Siddiq, said "Our position will be developed in accordance with the new position that has been presented by South Sudan in their comprehensive paper, and our paper is going to be revised accordingly and we'll see where we meet and where we differ and we'll try to approximate the differences as much as we can through the discussions that will take place." Both sides remain determined to continue the talks despite South Sudan's suspension of direct face to face talks last week, claiming there had been a bombing raid by Sudan; Sudan insisted it had attacked rebels inside its own territory. South Sudan and Sudan face a 2nd August deadline from the U.N. Security Council which has threatened sanctions against the two countries unless they resolve all outstanding issues.

## Ethiopia freezes travel by citizens to the UAE for jobs

Ethiopia has decided that no citizens should go to the UAE until agreement can be reached to protect their rights. The Ethiopian Consul-General in Dubai, Mesganu Arga Moach, said the freeze was a temporary move aimed at rooting out unscrupulous recruiters and putting an end to abuses. He said the freeze had been imposed because of the number of recruitment agencies working illegally. Ethiopia wanted "an agreement with the UAE that ensures our nationals' rights." The Consul-General said his office received "five to ten complaints a day from our citizens of abuse, unpaid salaries and people being beaten." Under Ethiopian law sponsors are required to provide medical insurance and undertake to pay a minimum monthly wage of Dh660. All contracts have to be sent to the Labour ministry in Addis Ababa, which provides workers with an ID card to work overseas. Mr. Mesganu said "We have excellent relations with the UAE Government but the problem is with the agencies. They do not cooperate with the consulate. So we want to put in proper controls on the Ethiopian side." Mr. Mesganu said the Government of Ethiopia would consider increasing the minimum wage and adding a clause for compulsory annual tickets home. A number of agencies in Ethiopia have been suspended and some have already been banned. The UAE Ambassador to Ethiopia, Dr Yousif Eisa Hassan Alsabri, welcomed the ban as a move designed to "to regulate and safeguard people. It is good for the UAE and for Ethiopia." He said his Embassy was also studying the matter and would send a report to the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who would decide what action to take. An estimated 100,000 Ethiopians live in the UAE but only one agency is known to be legally recruiting Ethiopian workers. The UAE Ambassador urged existing sponsors and companies to authenticate Ethiopian employee contracts at the Dubai consulate, the only Ethiopian mission in the UAE.

### Ethiopia to get international assistance for 'green economy' development

The Environmental Protection Authority has announced that Ethiopia is getting international assistance in its on-going efforts to build a 'green economy'. Environmental System Administration Director with the Authority, Wondosen Sintayehu, speaking during a **Green Economy Advocacy Week**, noted that **Ethiopia has become the first African country to receive technical assistance in this area from the United Kingdom**. Activities already being undertaken by Ethiopia towards building a 'green economy' have included the introduction of a strategy for this. This, and the role of Prime Minister Meles in the international arena, has enabled the country to obtain assistance. Ato Wondosen said British experts will now be evaluating the impact of the country's plans to build up its railway infrastructure during the Growth and Transformation Plan with respect to 'green' development. A senior researcher on environment and development at Chatham House, Rob Bailey, noted that Ethiopia was registering fast growth by building up a 'green economy'. Ethiopia's low carbon gas emissions, he said, had helped it get technical assistance from the UK. This week's meeting also evaluated various development project plans with respect to 'green economy' development and environmental protection.

### The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report praises Ethiopia's PSNP

The latest Global Humanitarian Assistance Report says that Ethiopia has demonstrated a long-term process of dealing with food insecurity which will ultimately relieve the need for emergency humanitarian assistance. Its **Productive Safety Net Programme** (PSNP) is mentioned as a major potential beneficiary of the country's efforts at resilience-building. Implemented in 2005 by the Ethiopian government and financed by the Donor Coordinating Group, the PSNP is the largest social safety-net programme in Africa, outside of South Africa. It aims to end dependency on emergency food relief and stimulate sustainable livelihoods. Although predominantly a development programme, the PSNP has recently improved its capacity through the introduction of a risk financing mechanism to help address humanitarian emergencies. This is made up of an early warning system, contingency finance, contingency planning, and capacity development components. The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report praises the work of the PSNP Risk Financing Mechanism, arguing that it provides "comparative advantages over traditional humanitarian responses to food insecurity" and that it demonstrated this capacity in its response to the 2011 crisis. According to the report, the PSNP was considerably more cost effective than the UN and NGO-managed responses to the crisis, spending an estimated US$53 rather than their US$169 per person. Where the PSNP Risk Financing Mechanism has been implemented, the Report also notes it reduced reaction time between identifying a crisis and responding, from a typical 8 months by traditional humanitarian actors to 2 months. Nevertheless, while the PSNP has led to improvements for those living in food-insecure areas, the programme still struggles to deal comprehensively with particularly severe shocks such as the 2011 crisis. Emergency humanitarian assistance may therefore still be needed.

### Eritrean Youth Forum agrees on an Eritrean Global Youth Association

The Eritrean Youth Forum that took place in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia from 7$^{th}$ to 17$^{th}$ July, agreed on the need to form an Eritrean Global Youth Association to facilitate democratic change in Eritrea. The meeting reached a unanimous decision on the need for such an organization, and spent considerable time talking about methods to make it inclusive and legitimate. The UN Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkorios, spoke at the meeting to share his experience. The Forum chose Dr. Bereket Birhane Weldeab as its president, Mr. Kalid Abdu as vice-president and Ms. Luwam Tewelde as secretary-general, and the meeting chose an executive committee of seven members. Participants saw the forum as particularly important as it gave the youth of Eritrea, unable to meet in any similar way in their own country, the opportunity to discuss the future of Eritrea. It was unanimously welcomed as providing the sort of discussion which could help the youth of Eritrea formulate suggestions for ways to strengthen efforts to bring about democratic change in Eritrea.