

A Week in the Horn

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The Need for Realising Unconditional Ceasefire in Sudan – The Addis Ababa “Political Dialogue for the Peace and Stability of the Sudan”

The 43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union

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The 2nd Ethio-Azerbaijani Political Consultation in Baku

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The Kenyan Capital, Nairobi, hosted a two-day (13-14 July) meeting of the 43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union.

AUC chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat said that on Wednesday (July 12), he welcomed a delegation of Sudanese civilians as part of the numerous consultations he has had and continues to have with different stakeholders in order to engage and consult with them all as part of the Continent's efforts to find a resolution to the Sudanese crisis.

On Thursday, the AUC Chair participated at the Summit of Neighbouring States of Sudan that convened in Cairo, Egypt at the invitation of President Abdulfattah Al-Sisi. He reiterated the commitment of the African Union to continue working within the Common AU-IGAD Roadmap to coordinate collective action in support of Sudan.

Over 1,000 high-level government and private sector leaders from Africa and the US are gathered in Gaborone for the U.S.-Africa Business Summit from July 11-14. The summit aims to enhance Africa's value chains, discuss the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and explore investment opportunities as trade barriers are removed.

AeTrade Group has registered 3.5 million small and medium enterprises in Africa to use the SOKOKUU digital platform. The platform aims to minimize physical barriers and enhance intra- and inter-African trade. The Group is working with the African Union, Ethiopia, and Ethiopian Airlines with Addis Ababa being one of its regional centres, to realize its continental objectives, including facilitating the implementation of the AfCFTA through e-commerce using SOKOKUU. The platform is expected to join 75–80 million small and medium enterprises within 15 years.

Commissioner Maya Sahli Fadel, the Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons, and Migrants in Africa and Commissioner in Charge of the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Tunisia, expressed her deep concern about the situation of sub-Saharan migrants deported to the Libyan desert subsequent to a roundup that followed the murder of a Tunisian citizen by migrants. The African Union Commission (AUC), in its press release on Tuesday (July 11), confirmed that the Special Rapporteur condemned the murders and offered condolences to the grieving family.

The African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat, hosted the 14th AU High-Level Private Sector Forum in Nairobi, Kenya from July 10-12. The three-day forum themed "*Public-Private Sector Engagement for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development while Deepening Regional and Continental Trade and Investment towards Implementation of AfCFTA*" aimed at leveraging the AfCFTA to promote regional value chains, increase productive capacity, enhance the role of women and youth in regional and continental development, and leverage trends in digital transformation to enhance trade.

Ethiopia

Addis Ababa on Monday hosted the Heads of State and Government of the *IGAD Quartet Group of Countries*, under the rubric of 'A 'Political Dialogue for the Peace and Stability of the Sudan', to advocate for peace in Sudan. The leaders in their communique, urged the warring parties to cease hostilities and commit to a ceasefire to bring about peace in the country.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on discussed the Sudanese crisis, bilateral relations and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). PM Abiy lauded his meeting with el-Sisi and said, they discussed bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. The issuance of a joint statement was the affirmation of the spirit of cooperation that buttresses the relations between Ethiopia and Egypt. The PM also visited Cairo.

A high-level delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen took part in the *43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union* in Nairobi, Kenya. Demeke called for an expedited institutional reform at the African Union. The delegation also visited the Ethiopian Embassy in Kenya and undertook a tree-planting exercise as part of the nation-wide *Green Legacy Initiative*.

On the margins of the *43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union* that is underway in Nairobi, Kenya, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, met with Foreign Minister of Somalia, Cameroon, Malawi and the Gambia and held discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. They have also exchanged views on current issues in their respective countries.

DPM and FM Demeke conferred at his office with the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs of the United States Molly Phee on Tuesday (11 July). They discussed bilateral and

regional issues of mutual interest and ways of boosting cooperation in key areas at bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues.

The three-day (08 -10 July) *African Job Creation Forum*, which was hosted in Addis Ababa as part of the commemoration of African Integration Day, concluded on Monday (July 10). Demeke Mekonnen, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs urged African nations to step up efforts to solve the challenges in creating job opportunities in the continent.

The 22nd annual Wanderlust Reader Travel Awards; UK's longest running and largest travel magazine has announced the nomination of Ethiopia for the most *Desirable Emerging Destination* in 2023. Wanderlust Reader Travel Awards nominated Ethiopia for its colourful and diverse heritages that brought on the aptly named 'historical circuit'.

Eritrea

Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki arrived in Cairo on Wednesday (July 12) to participate in a meeting organized in Egypt to start talks between Sudan's warring Parties, the Minister of Information, Yemane Gebremeskel disclosed.

Somalia

The Somali government recruited 20,000 Soldiers over the past year to handle security challenges, mainly posed by al-Shabaab, as the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) draws down. Thousands of Somali recruits were sent to Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda for training.

At the request of the Federal Government of Somalia, U.S. Africa Command conducted three collective self-defence airstrikes overnight in a remote area near Afmadow, approximately 105 kilometres north of Kismayo, against al-Shabaab terrorists on Sunday (July 9).

A high-level African Union delegation led by the Director of Conflict Management (CMD), Sarjoh Bah, concluded a four-day working visit to Somalia on Saturday (July 8) to discuss the first phase of the troop drawdown and the new ATMIS Mandate. He had extensive and forward-looking consultations with the FGS, ATMIS, TCCs, UNSOM, UNSOA, and partners, including the US, UK, and EU. They agreed to establish a Joint Technical Assessment Team immediately to guide the planned drawdown of 3,000 ATMIS Somalia troops in September 2023.

South Sudan

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has launched a *Consolidated Appeal 2023* through which it is seeking USD 190,568,596.19 to meet the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, host community and migrants in South Sudan. In a statement published on its website on Tuesday (July 11) the UN Migration agency indicated that the Consolidated Appeal recognizes the significant needs that persist across South Sudan as highlighted in the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview.

South Sudan, the world's youngest country, marked its 12 years of independence on Sunday (July 9). In a speech on the event of independence anniversary, President Salva Kiir acknowledged challenges facing his government in implementing the 2018 peace deal meant to bring permanent peace but said he and other signatories are making efforts that would allow for South Sudan to conduct its first-ever elections.

Kenya

President William Ruto embarked on a state visit to the central African nation of Congo-Brazzaville on 09 July and met with Denis Sassou Nguesso. Ruto later announced the abolition of visa restrictions to ease movement of people between the two countries.

On 12 July, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Nairobi for a state visit. Kenya has been the first leg of his three-nation (Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe) tour of Africa. Presidents Raisi and his host, William Ruto vowed to strengthen ties as their governments signed a raft of trade agreements.

Over the week, major Kenyan cities including the Capital hosted violent demonstrations that left several people losing their lives. Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, Kithure Kindiki disclosed, "312 people who directly or indirectly planned, orchestrated, or financed the violent protests and acts of lawlessness, including a Member of Parliament, have been arrested, and will be charged with various criminal offences. The search for more culprits is on."

The Ministry of Labour and Social declaration has announced on Tuesday (July 11) that the Kenyan Government and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have collaborated to enhance safe, regular, and productive labor migration between the two countries. Kenyan nurses and midwives will soon be able to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) through a new deal.

Sudan

Egypt's president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, issued a warning over the deteriorating situation in Sudan and its harmful effects on all countries, particularly Sudan's neighbours. At the opening of the Sudan neighbouring countries Summit which began on Thursday (July 13) in Cairo, Sisi stated that Sudan's neighbours are most impacted by Sudan's situation and stressed the significance of taking action to alleviate the situation. Leaders of South Sudan, Eritrea, Chad and Ethiopia are participating in the summit.

In a statement issued on Wednesday (July 12) Osman Abbas, Joint Chief of Staff of the East African Standby Forces (EASF), has ruled out the deployment of EASF forces to Sudan due to the Sudanese government's rejection of a regional summit's proposal to deploy peacekeeping forces. Abbas stated that EASF regulations prohibit the deployment of forces without the government's

consent. Sudan's rejection of ISAF intervention has made the option of deploying forces in Sudan out of the question, according to EASF regulations.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres warns that Sudan may be nearing all-out civil war due to a weekend airstrike that killed dozens in Khartoum. In a written statement on Tuesday (July 11), a U.N. spokesperson expressed the secretary general's fear that the ongoing conflict between warring armed forces has pushed Sudan to the brink of a full-scale civil war, potentially destabilizing the entire region.

The Need for Realising Unconditional Ceasefire in Sudan – The Addis Ababa “Political Dialogue for the Peace and Stability of the Sudan”

On 10 July 2023 Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed hosted the IGAD Quartet Heads of State and Government meeting on the morning of 10 July 2023 in Addis Ababa. The Summit was conducted under the theme “Political Dialogue for the Peace and Stability of the Sudan”, in the presence of representatives of Sudan’s Political Forces and in accordance with the decision passed by the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the IGAD held on 12 June 2023 which mandated the Quartet countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan to work for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan.

The Quarter Council of Ministers meeting on 19 June 2023, laid the foundation for the Summit by instituting key decisions to immediately secure a ceasefire in the Horn of African nation. The summit was briefed about the current situation in the country.

In retrospect, it is exactly three months since the outbreak of violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Capital Khartoum. The conflict in due course has expanded to other regions of the country, mainly Darfur and Kordofan. It has cost thousands of lives, destroyed property and result in the displacement of millions including the hundreds of thousands now refugees in neighbouring countries including Ethiopia. The overall assessment of the conflict gravitates towards a gravely alarming situational diagnosis. The Quartet, in this connection, expressed its “deep concern” as the war “so far killed thousands of people, and displaced almost 3 million people including 2.2 million IDPs and nearly 615,000 refugees” crossing borders of neighbouring countries.

Khartoum is experiencing an insufferably devastating war in a very long time. Darfur in the western part of the country is also expressing another cycle of internecine conflict. The deterioration of the situation is also impacting frontier states bordering Sudan. Risk of the war drastically affecting the overall peace and security situation of the Horn of Africa cannot also be ruled out.

It is against this backdrop that the first IGAD Quartet Summit was held in Addis Ababa. The peace and stability of Sudan is the peace and stability of the region. Saving Sudan from a deepening war must be the priority of all Sudanese parties. As Ethiopia has iterated time again, the peace process in the country should first and foremost be owned and led by the Sudanese through the IGAD under the umbrella of the African Union – “African Solutions to African Problems” by facilitating an all-inclusive political dialogue.

Hence, the clarion call by the leaders for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire during their face-to-face meeting is loud and clear. An immediate cessation of hostilities should be secured save the People of Sudan from further suffering, death and and massive destruction of property. IGAD in this regard strongly urged “the parties to immediately stop the violence and sign an unconditional and indefinite ceasefire through a cessation of hostilities agreement that shall be supported by an effective enforcement and monitoring mechanism.”

Securing the ceasefire would have also facilitated expedited delivery of humanitarian aid. As it is also rainy season the humanitarian toll would likely be massive. Thus, the timely delivery of much sought after humanitarian aid would save millions bearing the brunt of the military confrontation. The IGAD Quarter meeting, in its communique passed a decision “to take concrete steps to facilitate immediate humanitarian assistance to all Sudanese.” Furthermore, it called on neighbouring countries “to step up efforts for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to take necessary measures to ease and lift any logistical barriers to the delivery of humanitarian aid.”

The attainment of peace and stability of Sudan can only be materialized by addressing the root causes of the disagreement between Parties to the conflict. If a long-term ceasefire is achieved, it will definitely pave the way for an immediate resumption of a political dialogue.

The bottom-line inarguably is the fact that, the peace and stability of Sudan is instrumental to the maintenance and consolidation of peace, security and development in the Horn. Saving Sudan from further conflagration and creating a conducive milieu for the warring parties to come to the negotiation table is the collective responsibility of Sudan’s neighbours. The guiding principles in the engagements to let Sudan experience calm and order should perennially be respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Sudan.

Ethiopia, in this regard, is committed to playing a pivotal role in collaboration with other regional states and partners to let peace reign in the country. The warring parties must also understand that saving Sudan and ending this senseless war is in the best interest of the People of Sudan and of themselves.

Their activities, therefore, is guided by the respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Republic of the Sudan. The warring parties must also understand that saving Sudan and ending this senseless war is in the best interest of the people of Sudan and the parties themselves. There is no military solution to the conflict. Only negotiation can lead to its resolution and an all-inclusive political dialogue is key to address all the unanswered questions in Sudan.

Ethiopia as yesterday will continue to strive and contribute to the peace and stability of Sudan. It will stand by the side of the brotherly people of Sudan. Ethiopia will continue engaging the two sides and the civilian political parties for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Everyone involved in the war needs to realize that Sudan and its people come before them.

The 43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union

The 43rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union convened in the Kenyan Capital, Nairobi, from 13 to 14 July 2023.

A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, took part in the Executive Council Sessions. Delegations from Member States of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms participated the

continental gathering and deliberated on various agenda items that have crucial significance in realizing collective aspirations of AU Member States.

The Executive Council meeting was preceded by the 46th Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) of the AU, which was held in Addis Ababa from 19 June to 04 July 2023.

Several agenda items, including the report of the 46th PRC meeting, were tabled at the EC meeting in Nairobi. The Council discussed the report on the implementation of the theme of the year 2023, which is “*Acceleration of AfCFTA Implementation.*” The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a flagship project of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the largest free Trade Area Agreement aimed at creating a single African market for goods and services on the Continent.

On the other hand, the fast-tracking of the institutional reforms at the AU that commenced was also discussed at the Session. The DPM and FM Demeke, in this respect, echoed Ethiopia’s full support to the approval of the revised structure of the AU backed by multi-year support from international partners.

Last but not least, the draft budget proposal of the Continental body was also deliberated on and adopted accordingly by the Council. Global socio-economic setbacks in the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic and geo-political conflicts that hugely affected Africa disproportionately were taken into account in the adoption of the Union’s budget for 2024 Fiscal Year.

Ethiopia’s participation and engagements in the meetings were of extraordinary importance in advancing continental aspirations of a more stable, integrated and prosperous continent. Apart from the participation in the Council meeting, the gathering provided ample opportunity for the DPM and FM to engage several Foreign Ministers of the Member States including Cameroon, Somalia, Malawi, the Gambia, South Africa, Morocco and Chad to deliberate on and reaffirm commitments to further bolster in bilateral, regional, continental and other multilateral cooperation. During his bilateral talks, Demeke briefed the FMs on the ongoing peace-consolidation efforts of the Government of Ethiopia and the status of the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement.

Ethiopia at the Ministerial meeting of the NAM in Baku

A high-level delegation led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amb. Mesganu Arga, took part in the Ministerial meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 04 to 06 July 2023. The meeting was conducted under theme “NAM: United and Steadfast in Confronting Emerging Challenges,” and participants from 93 member countries and 11 international organisations convened in Baku to deliberate on the need to further bolster multilateral cooperation in light of challenges.

In his remarks at the meeting, State Minister Amb. Mesganu, stressed the manifold challenges induced by the Covid 19 pandemic, climate change, and geopolitical rivalry, among others, and their impact on developing countries like Ethiopia and called for the need to support African

countries in building resilience against climate change and reform the global financial system to better serve the interests of developing countries.

In the same token, Amb. Mesganu underscored the pivotal importance of fulfilling commitments in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and urged collective efforts to address poverty, mobilize development finance, and combat climate change. He also emphasized the significance of peacekeeping efforts and the value of South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation.

Furthermore, the state minister reiterated the need for principled multilateralism urged the NAM to play a historical role in promoting mutual interests and shared values in these challenging times through a consensus-based decision making within the Movement geared towards collectively addressing issues of mutual interest.

On the side-lines of the NAM gathering, State Minister Amb. Mesganu, held fruitful bilateral discussions with Nepalese and Nicaraguan Foreign Ministers; Vietnamese, Maldives' and Venezuelan Deputy Foreign Ministers as well as his Qatari counterpart. Their meetings reiterated the need to strengthen longstanding bilateral ties and explore avenues for further cooperation in bilateral, regional, and multilateral venues, with particular emphasis sustainable development and climate change. Continued commitment to fostering cooperation on issues of mutual interest and their subsequent advancement was at the heart of the discussion.

In his back-to-back side meetings, the State Minister reaffirmed Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to promoting burgeoning multilateralism and collaboration across various regions. Ethiopia's active participation and engagement in these discussions also accentuated its determination to strengthen ties with fellow NAM member states.

Overall, Ethiopia's participation at the ministerial deliberations signal towards the country's continued and incessant efforts to champion multilateralism and continuously pursue the same with international partners to address acute global challenges and to foster shared peace, stability and development whilst backing a renewed global solidarity and partnership.

The 2nd Ethio-Azerbaijani Political Consultation in Baku

In a significant step aimed at fostering stronger bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Azerbaijan, a high-level delegation led by State Minister Amb. Mesganu Arga, on 06 July 2023 arrived in Baku for the Second Ethiopia-Azerbaijan Political Consultation. The delegation with its counterpart engaged in productive discussions on political cooperation between the two countries. The Consultation was conducted on margins of the aforementioned NAM meeting and created the opportunity to have a common understanding on further cementing cooperation in bilateral and multilateral fora.

During the discussions between the State Minister and Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister, Fariz Rzayev, the parties commended the positive outcomes of the meeting and demonstrated the commitment of their respective countries to advance ties. They also agreed to ensure the effective

implementation of issues on which consensus was reached. In this regard, the political consultation signifies the strides made in strengthening longstanding diplomatic relations with a particular emphasis on working closely in the trade, investment, tourism and education sectors with the spirit of friendship.

Similarly, the delegation also held productive discussions with Azerbaijani Deputy Minister of the Economy, Sahib Mammadov as well as the Chairman of the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBİA), Orkhan Mammadov. Promotion of trade, investment, business-to-business (B2B) linkages was at the heart of the deliberations on top of empowering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Ethiopia. It was agreed, in the connection, to facilitate reciprocal visits between the countries as an impetus for businesses to explore opportunities in each country and to forge new connections based on the prospects. The bigger picture points towards a renewed, enhanced economic diplomacy along with cultural exchanges that contribute towards a profound yet shared understanding of the relations between Ethiopia and the transcontinental nation situated strategically at the frontier of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

In addition to economic diplomacy, Addis Ababa and Baku also cooperate in the field of public service delivery. In order to explore and emulate various best practices and experiences in Azerbaijan, Amb. Mesganu conferred with Ulvi Mehdiyev, Chairman of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations. The Ethiopian side, in this case, was presented with an overview of the Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN) and its innovative approach to delivering citizen-centric services across government parastatals. Chairman Mehdiyev shared valuable insights and experiences, highlighting the efficiency, transparency, and convenience that the ASAN centres bring to fellow Azerbaijanis. Recognizing the potential benefits of adopting a similar model in Ethiopia, both parties discussed the practical steps and necessary adaptations required to successfully implement such a system. The Ethiopian delegation expressed its appreciation for ASAN's willingness to share a rich repository of expertise and lessons learned in public service transformation. All things considered, this unprecedented collaboration between Ethiopia and Azerbaijan, in this respect, holds immense potential for enhancing public service delivery in Ethiopia. By adopting the best practices and experiences shared by ASAN, Ethiopia endeavours to improve its own public service and provide its citizens with efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric services.

The fruitful political consultation along with the agreement to facilitate reciprocal visits, signifies a turning point in the ever-deepening Ethio-Azerbaijan cooperation. With a focus on strengthening economic ties, promoting cultural exchange, and improving public service delivery, both nations are committed to achieve remarkable milestones through collaboration and innovation.