

## **A Week in the Horn**

*18.08.2023*

*Addis Ababa Hosts the 19th Ordinary Session of AMCEN*

*MFA Organizes Briefing on Current Affairs for the Diplomatic Corps*

*ENDC's Clarion Call for an All-Inclusive National Dialogue*

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### **News in Brief**

#### **Africa and the African Union**

On Friday (August 11), the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, issued a communiqué in support of the 10 August 2023 decisions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regarding Niger. The Chairperson expressed his strong support for the decisions adopted by ECOWAS on unconstitutional change of government in Niger.

The Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, on Wednesday (August 16), issued a statement reaffirming the AU's its attachment to the constitutional order, territorial integrity, unity and national sovereignty of Ethiopia to ensure stability in the country and in the Region.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) meets on Monday (August 14) to receive an update on the evolution of the situation in Niger and the efforts to address it.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) issued a statement on Saturday (August 12) on the ongoing allegations and 'repetitive, deliberate and ill-intent smear campaign' on the leadership and staff of the institution. In its statement, Africa CDC said the allegations aim to destabilize the organization and target a well-functioning African institution led by Africans.

## **Ethiopia**

On Friday (18 August) Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed hosted Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and discussed the growing relations between the two countries that is rooted in deep mutual respect and a shared vision for mutual progress, in pursuit of sustainable development.

On 12 August, Prime Minister Abiy presided over the graduation ceremony of Ethiopia's largest elite force. The elite force is tasked with the dual objectives of stopping battles from occurring and if pushed into one, then finishing ones that have been started.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen on Monday (August 14), received at his office the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, H.E. Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and discussed issues of mutual interest including promoting religious tolerance and peace.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga, on Tuesday (August 15) conferred with the incoming United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia, Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov vowed to further enhance the longstanding partnership between the Ethiopian Government and the United Nations.

Ethiopian MPs on Monday (August 14) approved the State of Emergency that aims to maintain public order, peace and security, and constitutional order following the recent disturbances in the Amhara National Regional State. The House of Peoples' Representatives voted in favour of the State of Emergency with a majority vote (See Article).

On Wednesday (August 16), Safaricom Ethiopia commenced M-PESA Mobile Financial Services. The launch came three months after receiving the Payment Instrument Issuer License from the National Bank of Ethiopia.

## **Somalia**

President Hassen Sheikh Mahmoud on 12 August met with UN Special Representative for Somalia Catriona Laing in Dhusamareb and discussed ways of enhancing cooperation to ensure essential security, facilitating humanitarian aid and driving sustainable development.

On 15 August, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) concluded a week-long training to Somalia Police Commanders to enhance their knowledge and skills to tackle crime and help improve the security situation in Somalia.

## **South Sudan**

President Salva Kiir met the visiting Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin on Monday (14 August) in Juba and discussed the implementation the peace process in the country.

South Sudan launches climate early warning system on Monday (14 August) in collaboration with UNDP and IGAD to provide timely metrological information to alert citizens on climate hazards such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, and storms to enhance the country`s disaster preparedness.

## **Kenya**

President William Ruto made a working visit to Uganda on Sunday (August 13) and held discussions with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest, especially trade, security and agriculture.

President William Ruto, in his remarks during the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Presidential Dialogue in Nairobi on Wednesday (August 16), pointed out that reforms in the international financial system will help boost investor confidence in Africa by fostering better relations between public and private sectors.

Cabinet Secretary of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Alfred Mutua on Tuesday (August 15) held a telephone conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba and discussed steps to enhance Kenya-Ukraine relations.

## **Addis Ababa Hosts the 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of AMCEN**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) was held in Addis Ababa from 14 to 18 August 2023 at the Skylight Hotel under the theme “*Seizing opportunities and enhancing collaboration to address environmental challenges in Africa*”. The Conference was co-hosted by the Ethiopian Government, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) Secretariat. The session consisted of a meeting of the expert group from 14 to 16 August, and a

Ministerial segment on 17 and 18 August 2023 preceded by a meeting of major groups and stakeholders from 12 to 13 August 2023.

The conference created platform for African ministers to provide policy guidance for upcoming key environmental events, including the Africa Climate Summit, the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 28) and the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA-6) as well as Africa's participation in the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC process); Africa's preparations for the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16); preparations for the 5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), and how Africa will respond to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Officiating the opening session of the Ministerial segment, Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, in his address stressed the need for stronger collective actions among African countries and the need to work with international partners to create a safer and more sustainable future. Demeke also commended the African Group of Negotiators for their coordination of African common positions in climate and environmental negotiations and reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to supporting initiatives that seek to address environmental challenges.

The Ministerial Segment was chaired by Dr Fitsum Assefa, Minister of Planning and Development of Ethiopia, following Ethiopia's assumption of the presidency of AMCEN succeeding of Senegal.

In her keynote address she stated that, Africa has always been committed to addressing environmental challenges through multilateral processes whereas the financial, technological, and other commitments by the developed nations are not being met.

The minister also highlighted Ethiopia's strong commitment in responding to the ever-increasing challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation through interventions ranging from policy, strategy to implementation on the ground. She also touched upon *Green Legacy*

*Initiative* geared towards a greener and cleaner Ethiopia and called upon all development partners and fellow African states to join hands for scaling up best practices to wider scope.

This year's AMCEN was attended by more than 30 Environment Ministers, high level dignitaries from UN institutions and partner organizations, major groups, NGOs and relevant stakeholders, with a total of more than 400 participants. The conference provided a platform further strengthening Africa's collective engagement in the global environmental agenda, including in the various conference of the parties of environmental agreements, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and other multilateral processes a platform related to combating climate change, desertification, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution, among others, and ensure that the region is not only able to address the challenges in these areas but also seizes emerging opportunities for a sustainable development of the Continent.

### **MFA Organizes Briefing on Current Affairs for the Diplomatic Corps**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry of Justice on 15 August 2023 organized a briefing session on current developments in Ethiopia for heads of diplomatic missions and various regional and international organizations based in Addis Ababa.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said, the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement progressing well, while some work remains in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation process, and in the mobilization of resources. He said, The African Union and other partners in the international community have continued their support for towards the full implementation of the Agreement. While reaffirming the continued commitment of the Government to peacefully resolve tensions in other parts of the country, Demeke also commended the persistent and constructive engagement of partners in this process.

Speaking of the current situation in Amhara Region, Demeke said, the declaration of the state of emergency was necessitated by the need to restore law and order. Efforts are underway to solve the conflict peacefully through dialogue with the involvement of elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, the youth, and women groups, the DPM and FM added.

Concluding his remarks, Demeke underscored that the answer to the many unanswered questions in the country will only be arrived at through peaceful dialogue that is based on the twin pillars that are the *National Dialogue* and the *Transitional Justice Policy Options*.

The Minister of Justice and a Member of the National State of Emergency Command Post, Dr. Gedion Timothewos, on his part, substantively briefed the participants on the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the complementary processes including transitional justice policy options and the public consultations on the national dialogue. He also gave an in-depth overview of the security situation in Amhara Region, the rationale behind the declaration of state of emergency and reiterated the painstaking efforts of the Government to restore law and order, to protect civilians, bring about a peaceful solution through dialogue to pave the way for a return to normalcy.

At the end of his briefing, Dr. Gedion responded to questions raised by the esteemed participants.

### **ENDC's Clarion Call for an All-Inclusive National Dialogue**

Over the week the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) made a public pronouncement on the need for an *Unconditional Cessation of Hostilities and Immediate Engagement in an All-Inclusive National Dialogue* in the country. In its plea, the ENDC stated, in contemporary Ethiopia there are deep divisions and differences of opinions among political elites, opinion leaders and some segments of society on the most fundamental national issues and reiterated the urgent need for creating a fertile ground for an all-inclusive national dialogue to effectively address structural causes of violent conflicts, to bring about a national consensus and to gradually build trust between the state and society.

Citing its full-fledged engagements in the selection of participants and collection of initial agenda issues from various stakeholders in different parts of the country including, but not limited to: Harari, Sidama, South West Ethiopia, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, and City Administration of Dire Dawa, the Commission stressed the challenges it has faced due to ongoing conflicts in parts of the country, which are stumbling blocks and hurdles of its activities.

Taking stock of the situation on the ground, the ENDC has previously conducted its extraordinary session on 07 August 2023 to deliberate on the burning national issues that are inimical to the constitutional order and stability in different parts of the country. During this extraordinary session, the Commission made a clarion call to all parties to the conflict to exercise unconditionally stop the fighting and immediately engage in all-inclusive national dialogue to nurture a culture of dialogue and cooperation for the realization and fruition of this most pressing national call.

The ENDC is an Ethiopia-owned initiative established by the House of People's Representatives with declaration of *Proclamation No.1265/2021* in accordance with Article 55(1) of the Constitution. It was setup for a three-year period to lead an independent, inclusive, and transparent national dialogue in Ethiopia.

Among other things, the Commission was established with the objective of:

1. Facilitating consultation between the various segments of the society by identifying the root causes of the difference on fundamental national issues and identifying the topics on which the discussion will take place;
2. Implementing an effective National Dialogue process by ensuring that National Dialogues are inclusive, leading by a competent and impartial body, with a clear focus on the cause of disagreements, guided by transparent system, and have a plan to implement the results of the consultations and;
3. Forging a political culture that can solve internal problems that have been simmering for centuries through dialogues and create a conducive environment for the building of a democratic system by laying the social and political foundations on the basis of which current problems can be solved in a sustainable manner to effect firm foundation for national consensus and gradual formation of a State with stout legitimacy

### **House Approves the State of Emergency in Amhara Region**

The recent unrest in the Amhara regional state has been endangering the safety and livelihood of its inhabitants and the peace of the region. It has also resulted in the disruption of economic activities, the loss civilian lives and security forces.

Consequently, the Government of Ethiopia has incessantly been calling for a peaceful dialogue and the return of calm and order in the region. Yet, in the face of such instabilities, it has become imperative for the Government to restore law and order in the region. The Council of Ministers, in its 23<sup>rd</sup> regular session later proclaimed a *State of Emergency (SoE) Proclamation No. 6/2015* on Friday (August 04) to maintain public order, peace and security, and the constitutional order. Prior to this, it is important to note that Regional Administration has appealed to the Federal Government to take the appropriate legal measures in the region.

The SoE Proclamation was tabled to the House of Peoples' Representatives for declaration On Monday (August 14). During the session, Tesfaye Beljige, Chief Government Whip, pointed out the rationale and the significance for the declaration of the SoE in the region. He also underscored the necessity of declaring the SoE to in light of maintaining unity, peace and security in the region. Minister of Justice, Dr. Gideon Timothewos, has also addressed on the matter.

Consequently, the House, in its sixth round of the second year of the first emergency session, approved the SoE with a majority vote. The House, as well, established a State of Emergency Inquiry Board with the approval of the appointment of seven members of the board.

The SoE proclamation will remain in effect for six months unless terminated by the House of People's Representatives. The Proclamation has given due emphasis and made it clear that diplomatic immunities and privileges shall be respected.