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TOPIC:

Articles

- The state of emergency is gone: What next for Ethiopia?.....1
- AMISOM's exit from Somalia: Implications for peace and security in Somalia and the Horn.....7
- Resolving the crisis in South Sudan: Prospects and challenges for the revitalization effort.....16
- Somaliland: Getting ready for another round of elections.....23
- Lifting the (in)effective sanctions on Sudan—or not?.....27



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The state of emergency is gone: What next for Ethiopia?

Exactly ten months after a state of emergency was imposed to quell unrest in parts of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn announced its termination on 4 August 2017, declaring that law and order had been restored and the situation stabilized. But as explosions sporadically affect peace parts of the country and a new conflict develops between Oromia and Somali regional states, one must ask: Have the underlying issues been addressed so as to validate the removal of the state of emergency?

Looking back at the history of the disturbances—how they began and escalated

It is worth recalling how the crisis developed in the first place, in order to assess where we are now. The first protest began on 12 November 2015 in Ginchi, a small town southwest of Addis Ababa, when government workers began to clear a forest for a development project. The protests quickly spread throughout the Oromia region, gathering steam with growing opposition to the “Addis Ababa Master Plan,” which would trigger an “expansion” of the municipal boundary of the capital city by “incorporating land” from the Oromia regional state. It was perceived that this would result in forced relocation of local residents, and

there was fear that they would not be adequately compensated. Those who wanted to politically benefit from the justifiable fear and the lack of proper explanation by the government on the plan further contributed to the crisis.

As the demonstrations swelled, the Government responded forcefully with mass arrests [see the September 2016 CDRC Digest]. Some were released after a few weeks and some were later charged with terrorism because of their connection with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

Nine weeks after the protests began, on 12 January 2016, the Government announced that the Addis Ababa Master Plan is shelved. But the zeitgeist had already shifted and the motivations for protest had multiplied. People in Oromia were now protesting citing exclusion from the political process and the region’s inequitable economic development. They were expressing grievances, primarily over lack of good governance, lack of employment opportunities and increasing inequality [see the September 2016 CDRC Digest].

Similar protests in the Amhara region and the subsequent escalation of the crisis worsened the situation. At the beginning of August the protests that spread to the Amhara region were related to the governance questions of Welkait Tsegede. The demands made by Qimant people had their own

contribution. These demonstrations were portrayed as a show of support for the protesters in Oromia, albeit their different objectives. The continuation of the crisis and the destruction of property and displacement of people from some areas forced the authorities to take measures that included shutting down the internet, as social media was used as an instrument of instigation and organization. Demonstrations that had begun peacefully spiraled into violence. In early September Prime Minister Hailemariam ordered the Ethiopian Army to use "any force necessary" to bring order.

On 2 October 2016, a stampede at the Irrecha festival in Debre Zeit (Bishoftu) resulted in several deaths. In the following weeks, infrastructure, government and private property as well as businesses owned by locals and foreign investors were vandalized and destroyed in Oromia.

A week after the festival, on 9 October 2016, a six-month state of emergency was declared nation-wide. Various measures were announced, including restrictions on demonstrations, use of the Internet and social media, diaspora television, and diplomatic travel to the regions. A curfew was imposed in Oromia and Amhara regions, and the state of emergency made arrests without warrants or court orders permissible. It also created a framework

whereby the people engaged the security forces to hand over those responsible for the destruction of property. The majority of the people who saw the destruction of property and the loss of lives in the protests questioned whether those responsible were airing legitimate grievances of the people. This allowed the government to detain thousands. If the population had not cooperated, the government would not have been in a position to arrest those responsible. If people did not handover those involved, innocent people would have been roughed up, triggering further discontent and anger. The state of emergency was extended in March, and the demonstrations petered out. What the state of emergency did is allow the security structures to take proper measures without difficulty. It should be emphasized that the cooperation of the population was critical in ensuring that the provisions of the state of emergency could be implemented to achieve its goal.

Lifting the state of emergency

Parliament voted to end the state of emergency on 4 August 2017. It was stated that the circumstances that had forced the government to impose the state of emergency had changed, and the situation stabilized in most parts of the country, rendering emergency measures unnecessary. The remaining challenges, outlined in the statement

issued during the announcement, could easily be handled by law enforcement agencies at the regional state level. With this explanation, the state of emergency was officially lifted and the secretariat delegated with the task of running the country for the duration was disbanded.

Credit is due to the Ethiopian government for deciding to revoke the state of emergency and restore normalcy. Extending emergency rule might well have been as damaging as the destruction associated with the protests, when they were hijacked with the intention of destabilization in the country. Undoubtedly, there are some who think it would have been better to extend the state of emergency again. It is not difficult to imagine that there may have been resistance to the lifting of the state of emergency. Some are citing the crisis that recently erupted between Oromia and Somali regional states as a consequence of the lifting of the state of emergency and hence demanding its continuation.

But now that the state of emergency has been lifted, it remains imperative for the government to carefully and critically assess the overall handling of the emergency situation and its impacts, and consider how to proceed so as to avoid repeating the miscalculations that contributed to the crisis—or making new ones. Unless the cause and effect dynamics are fully synthesized, with the

intention to avert both the discontent that manifested in protests and the imposition of the state of emergency that necessarily followed, then the cycle is bound to occur again. Hence, the question that needs a real explanation is whether the government has fully addressed the legitimate discontents that the people aired with regard to lack of good governance and the rampant corruption that was witnessed. Obviously the government has begun taking measures against individuals who were engaged in scandals associated with that. An effort to address the administration questions of the Qimant is well underway and other issues need quick attention as well. But the government's response to address the challenges has to continue and the state apparatuses should continue to provide services to the population fairly and effectively. Measures to address corruption create a situation of fear whereby the bureaucracy refuses to respond to anything. Those responsible in the offices decline to make decisions on literally everything. That is why the nation should come out of the crisis better informed about what precipitated the situation, how it was handled and, particularly, which issues still need be addressed. Such an exercise only has meaning inasmuch as it takes into account the long-term interests of the entire population and the future of the country. The government is talking a lot about the legitimate grievances in the

country and it has asserted that the issues have been addressed. There are a lot of questions about this. Talking about the issues doesn't mean that they are being properly addressed. And if attention is focused on immediate political benefits instead, then all the actions taken and any gains, perceived or real, will be useless in the long term. Likewise, outright dismissal of the past ten months as unavoidable would risk turning a blind eye to what they signify—the legitimate grievances of citizens. The effects of the period of the state of emergency should be understood in terms of the overall impact on the political, social and economic life of the country. A retrospective assessment of the past ten months' developments, therefore, should evaluate the causes and effects, separately as well as collectively, so that current measures do not become instruments to postpone real change.

As we have indicated, an assortment of factors contributing to the crisis in the first place, and the government has announced that various measures have been put in place to address them. Political tensions have been simmering within regional states, and between regional states and at a much higher level involving the federal government. Societal cohesion has been tested and frayed. Livelihoods and economic activities have been disrupted, to varying degrees, at all levels. How these

developments really affected the nation is a question that everybody is grappling with. And so a thorough assessment of what actually transpired, and the mechanisms put in place to address the unrest, requires careful scrutiny. The wisdom of actions taken, the depth of the reform frameworks put in place, and the commitment to implement the reform agenda—all require investigation on a grand scale. Instead of applauding its own success in quelling the protests, the government must revisit its actions and make a comprehensive report of developments leading to the crisis over the past couple of years.

The simple announcement of the lifting of the state of emergency does not suffice. Emergency rule necessitated the institution of a secretariat, a legal body responsible for overseeing the running of the country for the duration of the state of emergency. A great deal transpired on its watch, a range of lessons that must have been learned. In the best interest of the country, there should be a thorough review of its activities. Core talking points need to be prepared, deliberated upon and presented to responsible bodies and those engaged with the population. Again, a brief statement to the parliament will not suffice. Likewise, there are a set of activities already underway—court cases, reform efforts, etc.—with a lifespan that will certainly exceed that of the secretariat. Clear administrative and

legal arrangements should be made to ensure that all of this progresses in a smooth and transparent manner.

Indeed, this matter is rooted in the code of accountability and transparency—for that is what the Ethiopian people need in order to rebuild and maintain their trust in the government. Many actors were involved in the security arrangement, financial matters and the administration of various layers of the government during the state of emergency. Such arrangements often bypassed the usual bureaucratic restrictions, with ready-made provisions for impromptu actions for those involved in day-to-day decision-making. At a minimum, an internal audit of the tasks undertaken should be performed. The legitimacy of the whole reform initiative hinges on regaining the trust and confidence of the people who were questioning the government's record of good governance and maladministration in the first place, and thereby instigated the crisis that led to the state of emergency. Delivering a clean balance sheet, therefore, may be one way of regaining credibility for the government and reaffirming the nation's common goals.

Hence, an impact assessment should be undertaken, focusing on the impact on the economy. There is no need to pretend. Vital sectors such as tourism were profoundly affected by the state of

emergency. The confidence of investors as well as tourists, which has been rebuilt over time, has been eroded. Efforts to reassure expatriates about their engagement in Ethiopia must be redoubled. This has raised questions about Ethiopia and its role as the anchor of peace and stability in the region. The hard power is definitely there, but there are questions on the soft power.

So there should be no doubt that much has been lost through the imposition of the state of emergency. Of course much more could have been squandered. Given experiences elsewhere, emergency rule could have been extended indefinitely on the pretext of scattered incidents, such as those that are still occurring between the Oromia and Somali regions. But now that it is over, Ethiopia cannot afford to allow emergency rule to be reinstated anytime soon. However peace can only be guaranteed when the reasons for last year's protests are properly addressed. The actions to be taken in this regard should be comprehensive, and consultations with all stakeholders need to be conducted on a regular basis. The government has to listen to the people and what they are voicing in different forums. Issues with direct and critical impact on the livelihoods of ordinary people, including youth and women, have to be properly handled, and augmented with measurable and long-lasting programs that can be counted

and evaluated concretely. The government leaders have to spend sleepless nights thinking about measures and follow-up mechanisms that bring real information with concrete evidence.

Addressing the issues associated with maladministration, corruption and equitable distribution of resources requires sustained and resolute effort. Fundamentally, these issues reflect the institutional challenges of the bureaucracy, and therefore any attempt to address them can be realized if proper consultations and follow-up mechanisms are made with stakeholders at all levels. All assessments will be realistic if the responsible institutions will scrutinize developments and existing realities with responsibility, independence and professionalism.

This demands that comprehensive, frank and responsible dialogue take place throughout the country. The Ethiopian people are pushing for a more responsive, accountable government, and unless mechanisms for dialogue are established in which they will question their leaders at all levels, they will not be satisfied. The Ethiopian people must know why and how the instability occurred, who instigated the violence, what efforts were made to address the widespread discontent, and how the government intends to change so as to develop its capacity to respond more

judiciously—and with less hostility—to its constituents.

With humility, the Ethiopian government can address the possibility of unrest reemerging without instigating more protests. The yearly Irrecha ceremony will take place in the next few weeks. There is a need for proper preparation, so that similar situations are not created. This has to happen independent of the urge to apportion blame or reap political benefits from the process.

Altogether, it is the peace and stability of the country that remains at stake. So much has been achieved in terms of economic progress in the past two decades. This happened because Ethiopia stayed at peace with itself and the Ethiopian people very much value that. Now the resilience of these achievements is clearly being tested. It is up to all Ethiopians, politicians and citizens alike, to preserve their gains and continue moving forward, with the vision to realize durable stability and development in the country.

Ethiopia has been nourishing a seed of optimism, as it does away with the curse of underdevelopment and instability. But the notion still remains immature, without a strong rooted system and with all the possibility for regression. The issues raised during the protests, imagined or real, have the potential to disrupt the country's

achievements if they are not properly addressed. Developments in the immediate aftermath of the lifting of the state of emergency remind us that there is still unfinished business. The discontent that led to the protests has not evaporated, and it must not be ignored.

AMISOM's exit from Somalia: Implications for peace and security in Somalia and the Horn

Recent initiatives by the international community and the Somalia Federal Government (SFG) in relation to the future of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) suggest the possibility of a revision of its operational mandate, and its gradual withdrawal between 2017 and 2021. There appears to be a consensus between the newly elected government in Mogadishu, the African Union and the UN on the need to progressively transfer responsibility to the Somali security forces, shifting the entire responsibility for maintaining the country's peace and security to Somalia's National Army (SNA), when the SNA has the capacity for this. Various activities undertaken by stakeholders associated with AMISOM have set up the broader framework on how best to realize this process. Prominent developments, in this regard, include the 16 April 2016 agreement among Somali politicians, albeit with challenges in the implementation, on

the key principles of the National Security Architecture, the subsequent establishment of the National Security Council that includes the SFG, all of the Federal Member States (FMS), the signing of a new Partnership Agreement and a Security Pact by Somalia and its international partners during the 11 May London Conference on Somalia, and the AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM that was conducted between 10-29 May 2017.

Viewed broadly, AMISOM's gradual exit fits well in the emerging trend of scaling down UN peacekeeping operations due to pressure on the organization from a few of the major financial contributing countries, primarily due to budgetary concerns and their respective policies internally. Similar proposals are being forwarded to UNAMID, MONUSCO and other peacekeeping missions. As of January 2016, longstanding backers of AMISOM, particularly the EU, which has funded the stipends paid to AMISOM troops, also reduced their funding of the Mission by 20 percent. Obviously, the EU should not be blamed for this, although the move has compromised the standing of the Mission, as no alternate financial resources have been put in place to compensate for the reduction. But at the same time, it is clear that AMISOM has succeeded in its mission, with a fairly positive trajectory augmented by the recent political transformation in Somalia, albeit

challenges on the way forward to establish institutions that can further sustain the achievements. The parliamentary and presidential elections, held in the fall of 2016 and February 2017 respectively, have created an optimistic view of the country's growing capacity to manage its own affairs. And so since the elections there has been a sustained call to strengthen Somalia's military posture, with emphasis on revitalization of the national army and police force and a determination to reduce the size of AMISOM.

Somalia's new National Security Architecture (NSA) provides for the creation of a Somali National Army (SNA) comprising 18,000 troops, excluding the Special Forces (Danab), Air Force and Navy, as well as a 32,000-strong police force divided between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States. With due consideration of the challenges impeding the constitution of these security forces, they are expected to gradually replace the 22,126 AMISOM personnel. No doubt the execution of this initiative has to be viewed in light of the political and security challenges that Somalia still confronts. In spite of the apparent progress in realizing the smooth transfer of power, it goes without saying that the government of President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo continues to face complex and daunting challenges. As SRSG Keating told the UN Security

Council recently, the SFG's honeymoon is over. But it should be underscored that it is not the transfer to Ethiopia of a well-known Ogaden National Liberation Front figure, and the reverberations of the Government's determination to maintain a neutral posture in the dispute between important Gulf partners that are straining the relations between state institutions, as claimed by the SRSG. It should be clear that political actors that want to undermine the leadership of the SFG have instrumentalized these issues. The crisis is internal. There is clan-based friction among Somali politicians that must be sorted out, relations between the SFG and the FMS that must stabilize; these are the main problems. The alliances that were created during the election are either broken or disbanded and the opportunity those issues created to squeeze resources from the leadership are the ones creating the strain. There is also little readiness to recognize realities on the ground and be ready to address differences with the FMS. There is no doubt that the alleged "neutrality" of the SFG in the Gulf crisis did not spare Somalia from being impacted in center-periphery relations. But most of the problems are local and the leadership needs a vision to address them at all levels.

All in all, in the political sphere, Somalia is not yet out of the woods. The much-celebrated recent political change

occurred in the context of AMISOM's security guarantees, and the SFG still relies heavily on AMISOM's protection, although the campaigns during the elections centered on AMISOM's quick withdrawal. Al-Shabaab remains a force to reckon with, as the terrorist group retains its ability to wreak havoc and derail the progress achieved and even to regress the country back into total chaos unless resolute leadership is demonstrated by the governments in Somalia (both federal and state-level), and the regions that are fighting Al-Shabaab, and all grievances are addressed that would provide space for Al-Shabaab's maneuvers. It continues to launch attacks against AMISOM bases and controls and administers territories, particularly in the Juba valley, lower Shebelle and in some parts of the central and Hiraa regions. This is why any initiative to reconfirm or adjust AMISOM's mandate needs to include a clear plan for combating the terrorist group's operating capabilities in Somalia—a task that, if left unheeded, will dramatically undermine the country's achievements.

In the short to medium term, AMISOM remains a decisive pillar in maintaining peace and security in Somalia. The AU/UN Joint Review as well as the 29 July meeting in Mogadishu between AMISOM and the SFG attests to this fact. For the moment, the urgent need to secure "adequate and predictable"

funding for AMISOM is the priority, so that it can continue to carry out the critical task of supporting the SFG and the regional states in maintaining peace and stability in the country—a task the SFG and the regional states do not have the capacity to undertake alone for the time being. With the EU's funding reductions and lack of any feasible alternative funding, unfortunately, the Mission is already in trouble. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to expect improved performance against the likes of Al-Shabaab. Moreover, the Mission's concurrent training of Somali forces is equally imperative, as these forces are expected to take over all responsibilities for Somalia's security in 2021. What is more flawed and unsound is the fact that AMISOM troops, who are serving in the deadliest peace operation ever, are paid almost 40 percent lower stipends than those in other UN peacekeeping operations. Yet AMISOM's activities are more risky and life threatening.

Furthermore, in addition to the financial challenges facing the Mission, slow implementation of the reorganization of the Somali National Army and Police Forces are expected to compromise the initiative to revise AMISOM's mandate. In order for things to proceed in the desired manner, the transition phase must proceed smoothly, with all the required political commitment from Somalia's stakeholders, with financial and political resources available

expeditiously. The projected timeline will be observed if and only if the operational capabilities of AMISOM are kept intact and the task of reconstituting the Somali security forces is realized. Unfortunately, much remains to be done on both counts, and particularly in relation to the principles enshrined in the NSA and the Security Pact that associated with it the political commitment of the Somali leadership at all levels, which has yet to be used to advantage. Commitments made in this regard must be fulfilled by all actors in order for the whole project to advance.

The biggest challenge is the reconstitution of the Somali National Army and Police Force. Based on what transpired over the last twenty-plus years, with clan orientations informing the security arrangements, it would not be wrong to infer that it is currently advisable to reconstitute the national army in Somalia through a concrete coordination and harmonization with the regional states. It might, in fact, be much preferable to create regional federal units based on the constituted entities for the police forces and make them capable of handling the threat of Al-Shabaab locally. One has to take into consideration the well-entrenched *Xeer* system that informs the socio-economic and political life of the Somali people. It makes sense to apply such an arrangement to matters pertinent to Somalia's security and politics. This is

critical in the fight against extremism in Somalia.

Nevertheless, faced with all of these challenges, AMISOM has started to hand over some primary security responsibilities to the Somali National Army (SNA) and has initiated the transition, reorganization and gradual reduction of AMISOM armed personnel that would start at the end of 2017. Given the obvious gaps in the transition process, such a premature move risks a security lapse. A void may provide maneuvering room for disenfranchised groups like Al-Shabaab, and may even entail a relapse such that the SFG loses its credibility altogether. The late July meeting between AMISOM and the SFG, conducted under the auspices of "Transitioning Security Responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali National Security Forces," reiterated these concerns. The delicacy of the situation requires careful planning and execution by all parties, to be undertaken with the acumen to balance the transition process in favor of first capacitating the SNA.

Likewise, any attempt to scale down AMISOM's level of engagement and to subsequently replace it with the local security forces requires a clear vision and commitment, accommodative of the interests of Somalia, its constituent parts and those in the region. First and foremost, Somalia should not be allowed

to regress. It is important to emphasize that all achievements of the past few years could quickly be undone, and any relapse would risk another round of crisis, with the potential to disrupt the security and stability of the entire sub-region. This includes the relative peace that now prevails in Somalia, whereby Al-Shabaab's maneuvering room is significantly reduced and a fairly smooth political transition has occurred. This doesn't mean that Somalia's predicament is over or that the country's troubles have been laid to rest.

It is also important to contemplate the resurgence of terrorist groups in Somalia, which could draw neighboring states into the crisis inadvertently. This makes consultations at the regional level essential. Regional states as well as the sub-regional body, IGAD, should be appraised of security related developments in Somalia.

Generally speaking, there are five critical issues that should be taken into consideration:

- a) Conditions based withdrawal of AMISOM forces: What does this mean? This means that the Somali forces are capable of fully handling security in the country and should have developed a capacity to deal with Al-Shabaab. But given realities on the ground, the possibility of this happening in the short run must be thought through seriously and

realistically. The Somali forces need their respective elders to decide that compensation payment by clans (*Xeer*) doesn't apply to those killed when fighting for Al-Shabaab. If the Parliament was considered representative, it could have enacted rules that would ensure this. But this is not the case. The organized deterrence of Al-Shabaab comes from stronger clans. Al-Shabaab doesn't mess with bigger clans in this regard. All in all AMISOM's withdrawal would mean that the regional states and the federal government are operating in harmony to address security challenges, especially those that are caused by Al-Shabaab.

Unfortunately, if one looks at the relationship between the FGS and the FMS, the progress towards this critical coordination leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, the conditions would require that Al-Shabaab be weakened across the country. But this is far from the current state of affairs. Al-Shabaab may well be adapting to developing realities, shifting its operation bases rather than losing ground. For now, Al-Shabaab still governs virtually in some areas, undermining the trust and hope that the Somalis had placed in the SFG.

- b) Coordination at local, regional and national as well as international levels regarding Somalia: Over the past few years, coordination between IGAD, the AU and the UN on the issue of Somalia has been a critical element of the progress. But recent incidents indicate that lack of coordination between local actors and those who come from farther afield could be the most significant impediment to progress in Somalia. This coordination is still missing at all levels. Even within the federal institutions, between the Federal Government and the Federal States, coordination is negligible if not totally absent. In fact, some situations demonstrate various levels of competition between the SFG and the Federal states. The recent crisis in Hir-Shebelle is a case in point. Competition resulted in turmoil that no one seems to know how to resolve.

Beyond local actors, coordination is lacking between international stakeholders. Coordination between the leadership of AMISOM and the UNSOM/UNSOS is in short supply. The Security Council's recent call may help to fill this gap. But, there is a need for better harmonization between the EU, Turkey and the UAE (or GCC countries in general) regarding the security support the FGS and the regional states are

receiving. The biggest gap in the formulation of the National Security Architecture was created by the disbanding of the National Leadership Forum (NLF) that had created a mechanism for consultations and joint decisions to be made by the Federal Government and the Federal States.

Somalia's situation is abnormal and an extraordinary arrangement to manage the relationship between the center and the peripheries is badly needed. So long as there is no cohesion, different and conflicting policies are adopted. Observing the various positions of Somalia's actors on the recent Gulf crisis may help shed some light here, helping to elucidate these dynamics. Hence there is a need to reinstitute the NLF, to provide a framework for consultations.

- c) A proper funding mechanism for Somalia and AMISOM: The UN and AMISOM have created a unique arrangement for funding AMISOM's logistical costs, different from other AU-led Peace Operations. There is significant progress in this regard, and it could be emulated for other peacekeeping efforts. But this arrangement does not cover payments to the AMISOM forces, which are made in the form of stipends. AMISOM cannot continue

with unpredictable and unreliable funding in this regard. AMISOM's largest funding contributor is the EU with respect to stipends. Until this year the EU had been paying USD \$1080 per soldier, but it has now reduced this payment by 20 percent (to USD \$864 per soldier). And this amount is much less than the global UN rate, which is USD \$1400 paid for peacekeepers. But one should not complain about the EU's decision. In fact, one has to be very grateful to the EU for making the funds available at a critical time. This critical period is ongoing, and the EU is still paying the stipends, albeit at a reduced rate. Financial considerations are driving towards AMISOM's exit, not real progress and the increased capacity of Somalia's institutions. Obviously the UN has the global mandate for peace and security and hence should create a mechanism for financing AMISOM.

There are other realities that should also be taken into consideration regarding the funding of AMISOM. There is the incorrect assumption among a few sections of the SFG leadership that a reduction in the AMISOM forces and the ensuing cost reduction will automatically make funds available for the Somali National Army. This is far from the truth.

The current UN support arrangement entails that the SNA will get UN assistance only when there is a joint military operation. Moreover, the resources that are provided on the basis of the joint framework are always too little and come too late. AMISOM's withdrawal is not a guarantee that the SNA will automatically secure resources that AMISOM leaves behind in the pockets of the funders, and indeed the UN does not provide funding in this manner anywhere in the world, and Somalia cannot be an exception.

- d) The participation of AMISOM's Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in assessment missions and the need for greater coordination: While major actors in the Security Council (such as the UK, the US, Italy and the EU) participated in the recent assessment of AMISOM, there was no participation whatsoever of the TCCs. The effort to include some of them came as an afterthought and did not succeed. Yet including the views of the TCCs in all aspects of the fate of AMISOM is essential. Somalia's achievements are the achievements of the TCCs, unilaterally and jointly. Lack of proper consultations with the TCCs has serious implications. The recent meeting of the Chiefs of Defense Staff and their decision to

set the preconditions of the withdrawal is precisely the result of this lack of consultations. An orderly withdrawal of AMISOM, maintaining the achievements thus far, is only possible through proper consultations. One cannot benefit from AMISOM's presence in Somalia without consulting with AMISOM and its TCCs. Because of lack of proper coordination and in light of the recent assessment conducted, the TCCs are taking measures in the implementation of UNSCR 2372 regarding the reduction of troop numbers as envisaged in the resolution. In a meeting of the Military Coordination Committee (MOCC), the TCCs "reiterated the need for assured funding within the period recommended by the Joint Review for transition from AMISOM to Somali National Security Forces, availing the stated force enablers and multipliers and additional support, otherwise AMISOM will not be able to continue its operations beyond 31 May 2018. In this regard, the MOCC agreed to establish a team of experts, including the [TCCs], to work out options including the details of the exit plan for AMISOM to exit Somalia by 31 May 2018, pursuant to the decision of the Meeting of T/PCCs held in Addis Ababa on 3 July 2017 on the margins of the

29th Assembly of the African Union."

The convening of a meeting of experts from the TCCs to start preparation for the implementation of UNSCR 2372, including working out a transition and exit plan for AMISOM and coming up with recommendations for the AU, could provide a venue for serious coordination. Lack of coordination between the UN (more specifically UNSOM/UNSOS), AMISOM and the TCCs would result in an uncoordinated withdrawal, which might have serious adverse effects on the overall objective of the Mission.

- e) Implementation of the National Security Architecture: The Somalia National Security Architecture was a much-applauded effort in this transition. But what it actually accomplished is elimination of high-level consultations at the leadership level for Somalia's major actors. The NSA should give due regard to what the Federal States have put in place and their possible contributions.

In its 30 August resolution, the UN Security Council requested "the FGS to expedite an Operational Readiness Assessment of the Somali security forces, to be completed by 1 December 2017, to

be led by the Federal Government of Somalia with the active participation of the Federal Member States, and together with AMISOM and the United Nations and other international partners to determine numbers, capacities, locations and compliance with human rights obligations and international standards including screening for child soldiers, existence of accountability mechanisms, and level of vetting and training, and including the Somali police as well as other Somali security capacities, in order to hand over specific security tasks, identify capacities for joint operations, determine infrastructure, logistical capacity, equipment and training gaps, and provide a baseline for further security sector reform efforts, and to inform a revised Concept of Operations for AMISOM.”

This request should be seriously followed as the FGS might expedite the assessment to only consider the SNA, ignoring the Federal states’ security apparatuses. If this happens it will be disastrous. It will make the assessment unrealistic and create further tensions between the center and the periphery. There is already growing suspicion between them.

Without a doubt, Somalia’s peace and security remain the prerogative of the Somalis. Outsiders can do little if the internal actors are divided and competing. Every stakeholder—including IGAD, AMISOM and others—has a viable role to play in as much as they help the government of Somalia and the Federal states achieve this goal. Somalia should be capacitated to handle its internal affairs in the best possible way, guaranteeing local and regional stability.

When viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that AMISOM needs an exit strategy, to be realized in an orderly manner in the near future. But this cannot happen if there are insufficient consultations to chart the way forward, or determine how best cohesion may be created in the country. In any event, the priority should be enabling Somalia to handle these arduous tasks by itself. But with the existing challenges facing the country, it is not currently feasible to press for the withdrawal of AMISOM. There is no force on the ground that could handle the challenges without the help of AMISOM or Somalia’s neighbors. It should be underscored that more remains to be done, and the political process that the country has been striving towards in the past few years must be further strengthened and improved. All attention has to be focused on enabling Somalis to assume ownership of developments in the country, with full consideration of the

interests of their neighbors in the sub-region. It is only then that the likes of AMISOM can fully withdraw from Somalia. In the meantime, without a doubt they must carefully prepare for eventual withdrawal, to be carried out at some point in the future.

Resolving the crisis in South Sudan: Prospects and challenges for the revitalization effort

IGAD member states have launched yet another effort to restore peace and stability in South Sudan. Recent developments in that country have necessitated a new initiative from the regional body, which has been relatively remiss on matters pertinent to the crisis in South Sudan for quite some time and now realizes that remaining indifferent has more costs for the country and the region at large. The increasing fragmentation and political in-fighting among opposing groups and the associated humanitarian crisis on the ground demanded that the IGAD countries take up the implementation of the 2015 Agreement in the form of a call for the revitalization of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS).

To a similar end, during their 31st Extraordinary Summit on 12 June IGAD Heads of State and Government mandated the Council of Ministers to convene and facilitate a High Level

Revitalization Forum of ARCSS. The agenda delegated to the High Level Forum might indicate IGAD's determination, but implementation of the agenda is a different question. Agenda items include facilitating discussion between groups involved in South Sudan's political crisis, restoring a lasting ceasefire, realizing the full implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, and developing "a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period."

Pursuant to the decisions of the Assembly, the IGAD Council of Ministers held their 57th extraordinary session in Addis Ababa on 2 July 2017. On the occasion the Council approved guidelines and formulated the Indicative Implementation Matrix of the High Level Revitalization Forum of ARCSS. The Forum will be facilitated by the office of the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, JMEC, the IGAD Special Envoy and the IGAD Secretariat, and it is expected to result in a draft agreement, convene a series of consultative meetings, adopt formal resolutions on steps to be taken to revitalize the implementation of the ARCSS, and submit an ARCSS revitalization resolution to the IGAD chairperson.

The guidelines set the duties and responsibilities of the High Level

Revitalization Forum and outline a range of activities, with specific tasks to be accomplished by all stakeholders in the process. Some of the provisions require that the Revitalization Forum engage all parties to the conflict, including the signatories to the ARCSS, estranged groups and other stakeholders; conduct a full assessment of the ARCSS, with the intent to evaluate, revitalize and implement the 2015 Agreement; encourage all South Sudanese parties to unilaterally and collectively step up their efforts to formulate “a revised and realistic plan and timeline to compensate the delay in the full implementation of the ARCSS”; ensure the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities and Ceasefire Agreement, accompanied by provisions for tough measures against those who violate the agreement; facilitate an all-inclusive, genuine and transparent National Dialogue; ensure the facilitation of a definitive timeline for full deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF); ensure a mechanism that holds all parties who perpetrate humanitarian crisis and commit human rights violations accountable; help all IGAD member states forge “common positions on the implementation of the ARCSS and [...] align their engagement with all South Sudanese parties to the conflict”; and engage all stakeholders, including the AU and UN, in the effort to resolve the crisis.

IGAD member states’ efforts to devise a process to work towards a comprehensive solution to the crisis in South Sudan appear genuine and resolute. This gives the impression that the time of inaction – or more bluntly, of indifference – appears over. At least at the leadership level, IGAD states are clearly projecting the message that they are now ready to collectively and comprehensively address the problems the people of South Sudan face. Such a position sends a positive signal to groups long disadvantaged groups in that country, as well as its political elites and other stakeholders involved in the quagmire. On the other hand, those who closely follow developments in South Sudan warn that IGAD states must walk the talk and demonstrate that they mean business this time around. They insist that both local and regional actors are entangled with their narrow interests and are not prepared to see the bigger picture, take bold steps that would ensure peace internally and bring South Sudan to be seen as an asset to the region. South Sudan’s independence and the country’s oil spoils, these observers claim, have a long reach beyond its territory and have afflicted heavy damage to a unified and cohesive IGAD that has been engaged in resolving regional crises for a long time now. The region’s unity and common position on the crisis have thereby been tested, with fallout that is contrary to its

historically unified position on the crises in Somalia and the Sudan.

Practically speaking, shouldering the responsibility of resolving the crisis in South Sudan is no mean undertaking, and delivering on each of these agenda items will require hard work and careful navigation of the regional political matrix. More demanding for the Forum, however, will be overseeing the grueling implementation phases for both the procedures and deliverables. In particular, the plan to administer pinching instruments of coercion to all parties in order to ensure implementation of the decisions reached by the regional body remains to be tested.

The High Level Revitalization Forum of the IGAD Council of Ministers conducted a consultative meeting in Juba on July 24. Issues related to upholding a lasting ceasefire and cessation of hostilities among conflicting parties in South Sudan, the deployment of the RPF, and the humanitarian situation in that country featured in the deliberations. It was equally important to come to an understanding that a united approach must be forged, with all stakeholders committing to a common procedure in the effort to resolve the crisis.

But, observers argue, it is the very absence of consensus among regional states on matters pertaining to the problem in South Sudan that has

complicated the situation in the first place, and hence this needs an honest and transparent discussion among the members. IGAD states, and others for that matter, though they appear united in diplomatic terms and reflect this in meetings, do what they believe preserves their immediate interests and furthers their direct financial and political objectives, while harboring differing opinions on how best to address the crisis, each approaching the problem from a different standpoint. Developments over the past few years significantly polarized opinions, which in turn complicated the process as well as the implementation of the IGAD mediated Agreement to resolve the crisis in South Sudan. South Sudan's relations with its neighbors and the trajectory of those relations might prevent the country from addressing the challenges it faces internally. In this regard the positions Uganda and Sudan find themselves in and the interests they advance by way of addressing the crisis in South Sudan remain most pronounced in their divergence. Understandably, their respective stances reflect local security and economic imperatives that the two countries need to comprehensively address. But the dynamics seem to have forced the two to overreach, extending their roles deep into the affairs of South Sudan. Their contradictory but reconciliatory positions will force them to favor a certain party in the conflict, and have turned the

country into a playground where they engage. Of course, other regional actors also contribute to the dynamics, each joining the internal action with varying degrees of apprehension, be it security-related, resource-driven or political. It is this dynamics that challenges the recent call by the IGAD Assembly and the Council of Ministers for the revitalization of the 2015 Peace Agreement that the South Sudan stakeholders signed. One cannot be hundred percent sure if the IGAD countries read from the same script regarding the revitalization process.

On the flip side, conflicting parties in that country, those at the helm of power and the estranged groups alike, have exploited the disparities between regional states in order to advance their respective agendas, which basically amount to sustaining their precarious political and financial positions. Any keen observer of the dynamics can easily ascertain other motives informing the situation, beyond the questionable excuse of preserving the interests of the people whom each party pledges to serve and protect. Bluntly put, the people of South Sudan have been used as pawns in the various political-cum-financial transactions of their elites. This reality brings other challenges to the effort to resolve the whole crisis in South Sudan. If the problem of South Sudan is to be resolved, the South Sudan actors should recognize that it is

only through a united effort within the country, a recognition that without a unified internal effort to recognize their problems and create accommodative structures, they will be doomed to be manipulated and led into a quagmire that their country will not be able to extricate itself from for generations to come. If South Sudanese leaders are not able to compromise and unify to resolve the crisis for the sake of their country, it would be naïve to expect 'outsiders' to resolve the crisis for them. If they have a stake, and if a comprehensive peace will rearrange existing arrangements that benefit them, they might even be tempted to worsen the crisis. One should ask whether proper incentives to reverse the situation in South Sudan have been put in place for them.

The 2015 Agreement, by all counts and standards, was the best opportunity at mending fences across the political divide in South Sudan. It was intended to outline a framework whereby South Sudanese parties could create an environment in which the country might escape from the current quagmire through cumulative step-by-step actions towards sustainable institution building, rather than allowing the country to remain at the mercy of any particular individual.

But for a range of reasons, including the ones stated above, implementation

veered off course and the opportunity was squandered. Crucial opportunities to compel all of the conflicting parties to internally sort out their differences comprehensively were wasted. Political and humanitarian complications could have been easily averted had the region and others strictly pursued the course charted out in the ARCSS. Time has amply demonstrated this; and now the regional states are calling for the revitalization of the Agreement. Yet the challenges facing its implementation, even with the revitalization process, have grown manifold, and so too has the apparent estrangement between the main political factions. And the proliferation of opposition factions and the creation of new rebel groups, flourishing along ethnic lines, now add new dimensions that must be addressed in the revitalization process. Is there readiness to do this? Many doubt it.

Given the diversification of the political crisis, buttressed by in-fighting within the SPLM/A, SPLA-IO and Former Detainees, as well as the proliferation of armed opposition groups, enforcement of a universal cessation of hostilities and a lasting ceasefire will be an uphill battle for the IGAD initiative. Such an endeavor also requires a clear mandate about which party is to undertake the reconciliation efforts and facilitate the national dialogue. Likewise, serious consideration has to be given to the possibility of correlating the

revitalization effort with the government spearheaded initiative for national dialogue. In this regard it is not difficult to predict friction as the interests of the unilateral initiative launched by the government in Juba and the expectations of the recent initiative by IGAD states might overlap. Although, there is a general consensus on the urgent need to reach a negotiated settlement, involving all political groups representing a wide range of interests in South Sudan, some critical issues require serious deliberation and consensus. Establishing an integrated sequence of proceedings and thinking backwards from the desired final outcome will be critical. Given the history of refusing to agree to a process, one should not be surprised if the negotiating parties—or one of them—distance themselves from the revitalization effort, and those demanding explanations must be guided to IGAD. The end result of any effort will obviously determine how the parties behave in the process of revitalization.

But frankly, the path forward in realizing this agenda remains unclear, with varying interpretations of the approach and implementation mechanisms that are in place. Will IGAD states exert enough pressure on all parties to push them to accept the regional initiative in the first place? Will the government in Juba relent in its unilateral call for national dialogue and instead consider a

comprehensive framework as outlined in the ARCSS to address the crisis that the country is in? How will the constituencies of the negotiating parties be determined? And who has the mandate to make such a determination? Such issues must be sorted out from the outset. In parallel, IGAD states are expected to forgo any partisanship in favor of a given political group, and stick to the tenets they committed to during their recent deliberations, and prove their competence to resolve the crisis to the world. But how?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the crisis in South Sudan has grave repercussions across the region. States have engaged in political in-fighting to preserve their immediate interests, as demonstrated by the trans-boundary nature of the armed conflicts involving South Sudan and its neighbors. It is now becoming apparent that some IGAD states have lost hope, while others are visibly manipulating the IGAD initiative to advance hidden agendas, agreeing on something in an IGAD forum but doing another thing on the ground. Other states in the region also have to bear with the ramifications of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the ongoing violence in South Sudan. Uganda, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and to some extent Kenya bear the brunt of the responsibility of hosting an ever-increasing number of South Sudanese refugees, with all the resultant security

related consequences associated with mass influx. All of these dimensions should be weighed in the ongoing effort to address the situation in South Sudan.

Of course the people and the government of South Sudan hold the highest responsibility in the process to restore order and normalcy in the country. At any rate, it remains the prerogative of those in power to guarantee peace, political stability and the welfare of the state by developing a framework accommodative of all concerned. Doing this, in turn, requires looking beyond immediate political interests and party lines. If one embarks on the business of apportioning blame, now or anytime soon, then the country and its people cannot be united to face the future and make South Sudan's neighbors responsible actors.

Now is the time for action. The gravity of the situation in South Sudan requires the attention and determination of all stakeholders. Despite pledges of commitment to successive peace initiatives, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan still continue to demonstrate their preference for unilaterally dictating procedures as they see fit. This is not working and it must be checked. In this regard, the recent remarks by the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) stating that the proposed revitalization forum by IGAD "would not be a platform for renegotiation of the

2015 peace agreement” will be the first big test. This also means that in their recent meeting in Juba on 24 July IGAD’s Council of Ministers failed to impress upon the GoSS the seriousness of their intentions. All must be clear that IGAD should take collective ownership of any and all negotiation efforts between political actors in South Sudan. Again, if the national dialogue by the GoSS is a replacement for all efforts, it poses a clear threat to the regional initiative. On the other hand, if the IGAD states do not unify their efforts, the peace process faces further fragmentation between South Sudanese political parties and yet another escalation of violence between estranged groups. Equally important is consideration of the political clout of Reik Machar, despite his relative isolation in distant South Africa. His appointment and dismissal of military commanders and governors in the recent past in the territories he ‘administers virtually’ gives the impression that his influence on the proceedings has not yet ebbed.

In addition to the peace talks, immediate practical action is expected from the IGAD initiative. Foremost on the agenda is the deployment of the RPF. The view of the South Sudan government on the role of the RPF appears ambivalent, to say the least. The GoSS has pronounced that it might reconsider the issue after bilateral

consultations with some of the Troop Contributing Countries.

In the meantime the issue of conducting elections in South Sudan is being mentioned everywhere. But this matter needs to be clearly confronted and there is no need to pretend otherwise. The more fundamental question is whether a free and fair election can be conducted in South Sudan given the country’s current conditions. Are there enough resources and the necessary peace and stability in the country? If elections are held under the existing circumstances, the outcomes are apparent.

The situation in South Sudan is worsening by the day, and observers express no optimism about stabilization in the foreseeable future. Any regional initiative must seriously consider the rapidly deteriorating situation and aim at reversing a situation that will not be sustainable for the country or the region. IGAD states, in this regard, have no option but to increase their efforts and hold frank and transparent discussions on how best they can convince the leaders of South Sudan to resolve the crisis and remove the country from the current quagmire. Scaling back the level of engagement, or appearing divided and insufficiently resolute, could spell disaster.

Somaliland: Getting ready for another round of elections

Irrespective of ongoing subtleties in the sub-region detracting from frank discussions regarding developments and the status of Somaliland, it has emerged as a political entity worthy of full engagement and creation of a regional context to support the efforts of the people there. Since the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991, the subsequent administrations in Somaliland have diligently undertaken a state-building process, an endeavor that has proven quite refined and exemplary in both design and execution. The political and economic dividends the administration and the people have so far enjoyed, compared particularly to its neighbor to the south, are the product of a more sophisticated state apparatus with the full potential to influence proceedings at the regional level. Somaliland's enduring success now hinges on the smooth transition of political power, a feat that has stymied other states in the Horn.

Broadly speaking, the whole situation can also be viewed in terms of the radical political transformations that have occurred in the region in the post-1991 period. After intense civil wars and the associated toll on the livelihoods of the people, state fragmentation took place in the Horn of Africa, resulting in the creation of new states. In this regard, the historical elements that

propelled new states to independence in the Horn are not different from the realities on the ground in Somaliland. The difference is that the previous states that ensured the continuity of a unified state acknowledged the right to self-determination of those people who opted to go separate ways while Mogadishu continuously insists on the unity and territorial integrity of the pieced-together country irrespective of the realities on the ground. Paradoxically, Somaliland was a colonial territory with demarcated and delimited territories. Nevertheless, or perhaps as a result, Somaliland fares better on all of the human development indexes, and has managed its political affairs more successfully too. Successive elections conducted over the past twenty-five years certainly attest to this success story.

Now Somaliland is preparing for its fifth presidential election, scheduled for November 13. Despite the paradox of its belated quest for independence and the ambiguity of the international community's response to the self-determination endeavors of the people of Somaliland, it actually has been performing well in all sectors of governance and economics.

This piece intends to analyze the political dynamics in Somaliland, tying the analysis to the upcoming presidential election. The central

argument is that the administration in Somaliland has fared relatively well in spite of the absence of international recognition—the very case that makes it imperative and feasible for the rest of the world to stand with that state in the Horn of Africa.

While there are strong legal and theoretical arguments for recognition, the international community has yet to settle this question. Per the OAU's 1964 declaration, the unity and territorial integrity of all colonially inherited borders remain sacrosanct, although exceptions have somehow been made. And although Somaliland had a demarcated and delineated territorial boundary at its independence on 26 June 1960, after its voluntary union with Somalia shortly thereafter there was no question that Westphalian state-centered rights trumped people-centered rights.

Shifting the paradigm, academics will say that any analysis must begin with a consideration of the idea of a "nation" and its implications, as this idea is a precondition for statehood derived from the concept of self-determination enshrined in the UN Charter. Yet the impossibility of defining a "nation" is a recurring theme within the field of political science. Attempts to do so tend to fall into two categories, either focusing on a list of objective criteria or asserting a subjective interpretation

based on the consciousness of the community.¹

By either of these measures, Somaliland could be a nation—and a nation that has spent more than two decades organizing itself into a peaceful, secure, stable, democratic nation-state. Although it has generally gone unnoticed, Somaliland has conducted free and fair elections time and again, which should be taken into consideration to consolidate the gains that the administration has achieved. There is no question that the limbo that Somaliland finds itself should be resolved through peaceful means, and the international community is in a position to help. Some Somaliland citizens have begun advocating for a pact between Somaliland, Somalia and the international community that Somaliland will be given time (five to ten years) so that both Mogadishu and Hargeisa will advocate side by side their positions to the people of Somaliland, but finally allow Somalilanders to decide their fate through self-determination. Although the idea might be rejected by a number of people, it might be an idea that one can work on judiciously.

State-building at the Hargeisa International Book Fair

¹ Peggy A. Hoyle, "The Eritrean National Identity: A Case Study," 24 *North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation* (1991) 381.

The capital city Hargeisa now hosts a yearly book fair in which the country's history, democratic achievements and challenges are discussed and further explicated. The proof was in the pudding in July at the tenth annual Hargeisa International Book Fair that was held with high-level participation from Somaliland, its neighbors and with visitors and participants from elsewhere. There seemed no question that this was a cultural event as well as a state-building effort. The yearly book fair is attracting attention across Somalia. Mogadishu has already begun hosting a similar annual program.

Quite a number of the speakers were representatives of the Somaliland government, and some were members of the international community, and many of the panel discussions revolved around topics such as the Somali language and its institutionalization, developing Somaliland and engaging its youth in the public policy space. Events were held at Hargeisa University, Edna Adan University Hospital and the Saryan Museum, which is "dedicated to the history of Somaliland and its struggle to reclaim its statehood," as well as the Somaliland National Library, an institution that is still under construction, with books just beginning to arrive, but already imbued with great expectations and notable nationalism. There were calls for book donations, as well as funds to support campaigns for a

blood bank and a tree-planting cause, and a trip to Laas Geel for invited guests. A dinner for locals was also held, according to the program, in order to "achieve a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities" in Somaliland.

While the book fair featured much flag waving and a healthy dose of politics, diplomacy is a different sort of venture, with its own set of concerns and rules. Will Somaliland's recognition as an independent state improve regional integration and cooperation? What other consequences would ensue, immediately and in the long-term? These are questions that have yet to be examined and studied within a regional context.

With or without international recognition, the upcoming election allows three parties to compete, as enshrined in the constitution of Somaliland. The three are Kulmiye (the incumbent party), Wadani and UCID (Justice and Development Party). Most commentators share the view that clan and sub-clan alliances have the biggest share in determining the outcomes of the election in Somaliland. But others challenge this assertion, emphasizing that there are changing dynamics in the demographic composition of the population, as youth make up the majority, and that they may not necessarily follow clan lines when they vote. To substantiate this argument they

point to recent shifts from one party to another, contrary to clan ties. But clearly clan alliances and finances, the presence of strong political actors within the party, religious networks associated with the party, and the business community and their links will have a combined influence on the election outcomes—in November and beyond.

No matter who is elected, engaging Somaliland continuously, and providing all the support the people of Somaliland need is critical to ensure the sustainability of its achievements. Somaliland politicians emphasize the links Somaliland has with the region and the need to further nurture these connections, giving particular emphasis to Ethiopia. Political leaders insist that “[i]f Somaliland remains a dying cow while Ethiopia prospers economically, the net regional impact of Ethiopia’s progress might be undermined and the endeavor will not eventually be sustainable.” They insist that Somaliland should be given a space within the regional development endeavor, and Ethiopian leaders should be more than ready to encourage Somaliland’s development within a regional context.

Support for Somaliland could be provided in addressing security issues, addressing water scarcity and the adverse effects of climate change, and in enhancing the livelihoods of the people living across these borders. The

trade relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland are extensive, as the presence of a number of Ethiopian banks at the border in Togowajaleh indicates. But much of the cargo flowing from Somaliland to Ethiopia is contraband, and the Ethiopian customs authorities should look at mechanisms to address the challenges people face. Ethiopia’s daily export of chat, according to a former government minister in Somaliland, is valued at around \$1.8 million USD. This is what Ethiopia should earn from this cash crop crossing the Somaliland border every day. Ethiopia’s livestock is also exported to Somaliland, and eventually ends up being re-exported to the Gulf countries. Cement is another growing export to Somaliland, which has now extended to parts of Somalia. Hence, Ethiopia-Somaliland relations should be handled with care, from different perspectives. Somaliland’s determination to have good relations with Ethiopia, its readiness to cooperate with Ethiopia on every aspect from security to economic matters, including developing the infrastructure linking the two, should be further encouraged. Somaliland has diligently protected its territories from being used by anti-peace elements in the region and beyond. In addition to Ethiopia, of course, other states in the region must undertake the cooperation and integration effort with Somaliland, in a bid to strengthen collective peace and development.

There is no question that Somaliland and Somalia must eventually sort out their future relationship. Somaliland leaders underscore that the leaders in Mogadishu, rather than living in a fantasy, should come to terms with reality. They should be open to understanding what is going on in Somaliland and must treat the people there with the respect they deserve for their achievements. They should also not forget that Somalilanders are living with close to, if not more than, 290 mass graves in their midst, reminding them of missing relatives and loved ones; hence, it will be difficult to get past what happened between Mogadishu and Hargeisa at the end of the 1980s. But Somaliland is now moving forward under its own steam. Somaliland's bid for statehood at this point appears unassailable. Therefore, it remains incumbent on IGAD states, the AU and the rest of the international community to recognize the nation that already exists among the people of Somaliland and to create a mechanism for regional integration that will further enhance these achievements.

Lifting the (in)effective sanctions on Sudan—or not?

The recent delay in making permanent the temporary relief of sanctions imposed on Sudan by the US two decades ago presents the prospect of another obstacle that the region must

head off, circumvent or surmount. Is there a better, smarter path forward, towards peace in the Sudan, democracy and good governance in Khartoum, apart from a regime change induced by sanctions?

In fact, there is significant evidence that the delay in the permanent repeal of sanctions is due to problems within the US administration and unrelated to Sudan, as key positions focused on Africa within the Department of State and the National Security Council remain vacant under President Trump. The Executive Order issued on July 11, the night before the temporary relief of the embargo would have become permanent, stated only that additional time is needed for fact-finding and "recognizing positive actions by the Government of Sudan." The press statement put out by the State Department affirmed that "more time is needed for this review to establish that the GOS has sustained sufficient positive actions." But most commentators agree that there is no concrete evidence to substantiate the reasons for the delay as such.

While the White House struggles to get up to speed, the people of Sudan are struggling with the impacts of US sanctions. The government has been deploying various measures to help the country cope with the embargo for years. But since the government's

decision to lift the fuel subsidies in November 2016, food prices are skyrocketing. The price of imports and local goods is increasing as well, due to a serious shortage of hard currency for imported supplies. Moreover, inflation is over 30 percent (in January, Sudan's Central Bureau of Statistics reported that inflation had risen for the eighth consecutive month and was then at 32.86 percent), so people find that their money has less purchasing power by the day. Half of Sudan's population now lives below the poverty line, and the cost of living is ever increasing.

As a result of the dire economic conditions, many working-age Sudanese have left their home country, seeking opportunities elsewhere. Many of the best and the brightest among the next generation are already gone, draining Sudan of brainpower and talent. But even when they find work, they must use intermediaries or alternative banking routes to send money home to help their families. Sudanese banks have been cut off from the international financial system, and it will take more than a temporary reprieve to encourage the international banking sector to return. In fact, experts explain that banks are now over-complying, refusing to deal with Sudanese businesses at all since a penalty of USD \$8.9 billion was imposed on BNP Paribas for violating sanctions on Sudan, Cuba and Iran. They are avoiding the risk of operating

in Sudan, although it is technically legal, as long as the sanctions reprieve remains temporary.

US Congress is divided on this issue, and there is intense lobbying from both those who want continuation of the sanctions and for their lifting. Human rights organizations such as the Enough Project and Human Rights Watch argue that lifting the sanctions will strengthen the resolve of President al-Bashir, presumably referring to his involvement in undermining peace efforts in Darfur and South Sudan as well as his ongoing refusal to allow unrestricted humanitarian aid and access to populations in need.

But some argue that these groups have been receiving huge resources to continue their "humanitarian" work and hence want the sanctions to remain in place. And there is little evidence that extending the sanctions will bring about the results the US truly sought all along—i.e., Sudan's isolation and economic collapse, and the consequent toppling of al-Bashir's government: regime change in Khartoum.

Obviously, the impact of the sanctions is much more nuanced. The political and business elites close to the government are not hurting, but everyone else is. Yet the evidence strongly suggests that the government of Sudan will remain in power, while the country's ordinary citizens continue to suffer as a result of

the sanctions for as long as they are imposed. Meanwhile it is widely understood that the economy has suffered as much from government mismanagement, probably, as from the sanctions, and al-Bashir's administration continues to be adamant about taking measures that will change certain repressive measures, continuing the post-independence Sudanese experience of incompetence, malpractice and dysfunction of the three democratically elected coalition governments which has left the citizenry subdued, discouraged and unlikely to revolt. They know that the potential cost of revolt is high—as demonstrated all too clearly in Syria, Libya and Yemen—and there is little hope that the results would be an improvement on the status quo.

Twenty years of sanctions

Twenty years of economic sanctions have not had the intended effects in Sudan. The Sudanese government was first labeled a "state sponsor of terrorism" in 1993, while it was hosting al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Khartoum. But it was not punished for this immediately.

The National Islamic Front, which had seized power in 1989, was known to have links with Islamist movements and individuals who were implicated in attacks in other countries. Yet the US declined to join those in the Horn of

Africa who wanted Sudan to be penalized for its engagement in the 1995 assassination attempt against the then President of Egypt because US companies were involved in negotiations for oil concessions. But within a few years the US slowly began taking its own unilateral measures.

Trade sanctions were imposed on the country through the Sudan Sanctions Regulations (15 CFR Part 538 under US law), which resulted from President Clinton's Executive Order 13067 of 3 November 1997 (Blocking Sudanese Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Sudan). Clinton stated that Sudan posed "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," as Khartoum was continuing to support US-designated terrorist groups, and fighting a brutal war against its own people in the south. These sanctions prohibited people serving in the government of Sudan from owning property in the US, prevented Sudanese people from importing or exporting goods to and from the US, and banned US citizens from participating in the work of any organization that did so.

In August 1998 the US government sent 14 cruise missiles to destroy al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory, believing it to be a chemical weapons factory, and in retaliation for Osama bin Laden's bombing of the US embassies in

Tanzania and Nairobi. In response to ongoing civil war in south Sudan, Congress passed the Sudan Peace Act in 2002, and this law blocked all loans and credit to the country.

President George W. Bush renewed these sanctions and extended them to individual state-run companies under Executive Order 13412 on 13 October 2006 in reaction to Khartoum's brutal militia-led counter-insurgency during the Darfur conflict. The US had labeled the government actions a genocide in 2004, and the UN Security Council had imposed an arms embargo on non-state actors in Darfur, then extended the arms embargo to government forces in that region and imposed a travel ban and assets freeze as well. The 2006 Executive Order tightened the earlier sanctions, blocking the Sudanese government from holding property or other interests in the US and banning all transactions by US citizens related to Sudan's oil industry.

In March 2009 and again in July 2010 the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of President al-Bashir related to charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Darfur. Several other senior political and security officials were indicted as well. Nevertheless, more than eight years after the first warrant was issued, this measure has not changed the reality in

the Sudan, and the ICC has not been able to implement the warrants issued against President al-Bashir. Most African countries do not support this decision and have not cooperated with the ICC. This has even played a part in the possibility of Africa's withdrawal from the court *en masse*.

Washington's re-engagement with Khartoum

In the meantime Khartoum has made a certain amount of real progress in addressing concerns related to the political and humanitarian situation within the country, and thereby meeting the US criteria for sanctions relief that were agreed upon in June 2016 bilateral talks. This progress was acknowledged in January 2017 through the easing of restrictions related to "bilateral cooperation, the ending of internal hostilities, regional cooperation, and improvements to humanitarian access." There was a clear understanding that the situation that gave rise to the US embargo had changed.

On January 13 of this year, President Obama's Executive Order 13761, in conjunction with the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control through a "General License Authorizing Transactions Involving Sudan," relaxed the restrictions on Sudan's gas and oil industry, unfroze some Sudanese assets in the US, and allowed for the import and export of

certain approved goods and services. The Executive Order further stated that the Sudan sanctions program would be completely terminated effective 12 July 2017 if it was determined that the Government of Sudan had “sustained the positive actions that gave rise to [Executive Order 13761].”

This determination is meant to be made according to a State Department assessment based on “a consideration of relevant and credible information from available sources, including nongovernmental organizations.” Sudan’s progress is to be measured along five tracks, but the requirements have been left purposefully vague. The five tracks are: cooperation on counter-terrorism; addressing the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) threat—as the group has become marginal; ending hostilities in the Two Areas (Blue Nile and South Kordofan states—though currently the SPLM/N appears in internal crisis at the leadership level) and Darfur; improving humanitarian access; and ending Sudan’s negative interference in South Sudan. There is no indication of whether the progress will be evaluated holistically or along each individual track.

But in reality the Sudan has fulfilled all the requirements. It is clear that Sudan’s cooperation on counter-terrorism has been active and sustained, beginning soon after the attacks of 11

September 2001, and in this area Khartoum has certainly met US requirements. The only other countries currently listed as “state sponsors of terrorism” are Iran, Syria and North Korea. Yet although most US policymakers agree that Sudan no longer deserves this status, the list cannot be altered without congressional approval.

Sudan’s record with regard to the LRA is also positive, as the group has failed to serve as a proxy and the government has stopped using the Ugandan rebel group as the war with the SPLA is over. The government now seems to be cooperating in efforts to eradicate the group. At a minimum, the LRA is no longer permitted to operate with Khartoum’s acquiescence on Sudanese territory.

It is less clear whether the Sudanese military has continued to engage in fighting in the Two Areas on the disputed border with South Sudan. Violence occurrences may or may not have involved members of the armed forces, but no major offensives have been launched. The recent crisis within the leadership of the SPLM/N would definitely create a better opportunity for peace and provides respite for Khartoum. However, there are allegations of the involvement of militias aligned with the Sudanese government in some areas in Darfur. Moreover,

violent attacks continue to occur in Darfur, carried out by “unknown gunmen” or unspecified militia groups. And whether the government directs such attacks or not, it certainly has a responsibility to protect civilians and may be failing to do so.

Meanwhile in Darfur the last major government offensive took place in the first half of 2016. But four months ago the Sudanese military engaged with armed rebel groups entering Darfur from Libya and South Sudan, and it is not clear who initiated the conflict. The recent success in repulsing the attacks organized by Darfuri rebels from Libya and allegedly from South Sudan has been handled effectively by Khartoum, both militarily and politically, although there are also indications of a changing reality, including a new pastoralist community from Niger and Chad that has taken over the areas that indigenous Darfuris have left. A new militia that is not controlled by Khartoum is emerging from this new group of actors, and are allegedly becoming a source of new recruitment for groups in Libya.

With regard to humanitarian access, some concerns remain. Khartoum has a long history of manipulating and obstructing humanitarian organizations, and there were accusations that these organizations were supplying rebels during the 1983-2005 civil war.

However, Sudan has issued amended Directives and Procedures for Humanitarian Action, simplifying and streamlining the system with the stated intention of putting “the contractual relationships between the Government and Humanitarian Aid partners into clear and agreed frameworks.” These new directives came into effect in February, and it remains to be seen whether or not they will be fully implemented. For now, the government has allowed open access to government-controlled parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, as well as two humanitarian corridors to South Sudan. The UN agencies working in Sudan on development, emergency, recovery and transition activities have voiced their support for the lifting of sanctions, citing these advances, improved relations with the government, and their experience of a landscape that is gradually opening up.

On the final track concerning Sudan’s role in South Sudan, there is also good evidence of progress. For the last year, Khartoum has refrained from providing military support to armed groups fighting Salva Kiir’s government in Juba. Sudan was actively engaged in the mediation effort spearheaded by IGAD that resulted in the signing of the ARCSS. Yet several senior South Sudanese opposition political leaders reside in Khartoum, and both governments accuse each other of allowing armed groups to move back

and forth across their borders, and using their territories to resupply. If this is not managed in a transparent and accountable manner, there potential for further conflict is significant.

But the lifting of the sanctions would further encourage better relations between Juba and Khartoum as well as Khartoum and Kampala. The relations between the US and Khartoum also shaped the policies of Kampala and Juba on Khartoum. This relationship has been instrumentalized by Juba. Juba, for example, rather than addressing internal institution building and resolving the crisis, appears to have been engaged in addressing the “threats” Khartoum posed. Kampala did the same. But that preoccupation is being proved invalid on the ground. The lifting of sanctions would encourage Khartoum to engage with Juba constructively to readjust the rules that are skewed in benefitting one side.

At this point there is no question that the US should lift the sanctions. The circumstances that existed when the sanctions was imposed simply no longer exist. The context in Sudan is radically different, as evidenced in the negotiations, and the Sudanese people are suffering for no good reason.

Moreover, lifting the sanctions is likely to have positive ramifications for peace and security across the sub-region. Given the intertwined nature of inter-

state relations in the Horn, it is not difficult to imagine the positive impact of lifting the embargo. Taking this step is a calculated risk, but there is no question that it is the right move. Peace and stability in the Sudan have a key role in guaranteeing stability in the Horn and could potentially transform inter-state relations in the troubled sub-region, if the region fully engages with the Sudan towards regional integration. The actions that tarnished the international image of Sudan were terminated long ago, and Khartoum’s leadership appears to have a genuine desire to constructively engage with international partners, including the US. The international community should give Sudan the benefit of the doubt and an opportunity to prove itself.

Towards administrative reforms and stronger institutions, not revolution

The new directives issued by Sudan’s Humanitarian Aid Commission offer a first glimpse of the reforms that might be made and the benefits they could provide to the Sudanese people. There is some hope that state institutions may come to function in a new way, without having to start from scratch. This sort of development offers more promising prospects for the country than anything that has yet emerged from the turmoil of the Arab Spring.

Is there any possibility of a free press, an independent judiciary, political

accountability or an economy that provides for the people rather than the Khartoum elites? That remains to be seen.

For now it makes sense to encourage Sudan to build on its progress and continue its regional engagements as well as its cooperation with the US. This isn't time for a stick; rather one should look for another carrot. We have already seen the reaction to the threat of re-imposition of the embargo, as well as more targeted "smart" sanctions. Upon notification of the extension of the review period, President al-Bashir immediately ordered negotiations with the US to be suspended at the political level, although agreeing to continue to "communicate positively" at technical levels, and Saudi's insistence convinced the Sudan to continue its cooperation with the US.

Decades of mistrust between the two governments mean that the current situation is fragile. Egypt Has not been helpful in this process, as Cairo aspires to monopolize US goodwill in the region. Sudan is already wary of the US backtracking on its commitments. A breach of faith now, particularly if Washington appears to be persuaded by Egyptian sweet-talking in an attempt to influence it to continue with its anti-Khartoum stance, would demonstrate Washington's unreliability, not Khartoum's. Probably, this is a result of

President Trump taking over from Obama, and the new president's search for a face-saving mechanism so as not to appear to be following in the footsteps of the previous administration. But lifting the sanctions does not in any way compromise Washington's ability to re-impose them in the future. There is no permanent loss of leverage in providing this relief to the government of Sudan and the Sudanese people. The lifting of the sanctions would be critical for Khartoum in its relations with its partners in the Middle East. It's major political capital.

The US allies in the region positively engaged with Sudan are well advised to encourage Khartoum to hold the course, and urge the Trump administration—however delayed the decision may be—to finish its evaluation and repeal the sanctions on October 12. Anything less is neither helpful for the Sudan nor the region—it's not a blessing but a curse.