

A Week in the Horn

1st May 2015

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Iyad Amin Madani, signed a Partnership agreement to fight terrorism and violent extremism in Africa on Saturday (April 25) in Istanbul. The two organizations plan to carry out a number of joint activities in support of the efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Africa.

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union expressed her deep concern over the attacks on UNAMID last week. She stressed the need to pursue a transparent and fair investigation into the incidents and welcomed the commitment of UNAMID to cooperate fully with the Government to avoid recurrence of such incidents. She reaffirmed the AU's commitment to continue working with the Government of Sudan and UNAMID in the search for a lasting solution to the crisis in Darfur.

The First Africa Climate Resilient Infrastructure Summit, hosted by the African Union, opened in Addis Ababa on Monday (April 27) under the theme "**Africa: Towards Resilient Infrastructure Development.**" The AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr Elham M.A. Ibrahim, gave a keynote address welcoming participants.

A meeting of **The EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative Committee** was held last week (23-24 April) in Sharm El Sheikh. Representatives from the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and Malta as well as from the EU and AU Commissions and Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan attended.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, Chairperson of the African Leaders' Malaria Alliance addressed the **Commemoration of World Malaria Day** at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa on Saturday (April 25). (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam held a political dialogue with the EU resident Ambassadors on Tuesday (April 28) under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement between ACP and AU states. The Agreement calls for regular dialogue on democratic and economic government issues.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Ethiopian citizens are arriving back home from Yemen and Libya as the Ministry continues to implement integrated efforts to provide for their safe return. Over seventy citizens arrived in Addis Ababa from Yemen on Wednesday. The Ministry is working to coordinate efforts with the IOM to resolve the problems migrants face.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos on a four day working visit to Japan this week met with Mr Kazuyuki Nakane, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and members of the African Union (AU)-Japan Parliamentary group; the CEO and Chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO); the Vice-President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Chairman of the Marubeni Corporation as well as members of the Ethiopian Association of Japan and the Ethiopian Diaspora in Tokyo.

State Minister Dewano Kedir received a copy of the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Sudan, Ambassador Osman Nafie, on Tuesday (April 28). He also received the credentials of Mr John Aylieff, the new World Food Program (WFP) Country Director and Representative to Ethiopia on Wednesday (April 29).

The Ministry of Justice is drafting a new law to stiffen punishments for human trafficking while the Government is working through the embassies in Khartoum, Sudan, and Cairo, Egypt, to bring migrants back home. 200 Ethiopian migrants in Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya have registered to return to Ethiopia.

Fitsum Arega, Director-General of the Ethiopian Investment Commission says the Government expects this year to be a record for Foreign Direct Investment. (See article)

Election debates, organized by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, have continued over the last two weeks, covering Good Governance and the Rule of Law, and Infrastructure. **(See article)**

Ethiopia will be celebrating International Workers' Day (May Day) on Friday (May 1). The President of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) said the day would be marked for the 40th time in Ethiopia under the theme "Organized Workers for the Renaissance and Prosperity of our Country!"

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh told Somali's Deputy Prime Minister, Mohamed Omar Arteh, who was on a three-day official visit to Djibouti, that Djibouti was ready to provide any support Somalia needed. The Somali Deputy Premier also held talks with Prime Minister, Mohamed Kamil Abdoukader, as well as visiting new developments in Djibouti port and in telecommunications.

Eritrea

President Isaias Aferwerki made a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia this week (April 28-29). He held talks with King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud on bilateral relations and regional developments, and also Defense Minister and Deputy Crown Prince, Prince Mohammad bin Salman, and other senior officials.

President Isaias held talks in Asmara at the weekend with a South Sudan delegation headed by Mr Nial Deng Nial, South Sudan's Chief Negotiator at the IGAD-mediated talks in Addis Ababa. President Isaias emphasized the importance of keeping South Sudan problems free from external interference and warned against internationalizing the issue. He invited South Sudan President Kiir to visit Asmara.

Ms Amina Nurhusein, Minister of Health signed an agreement to enhance and strength health cooperation with Cuba's Minister of Health, Dr Morales in Havana on Thursday (April 23). Ms Nurhusein had been attending the International Convention on Public Health in Cuba last week.

Kenya

Kenya's National Assembly Speaker Justin Muturi has called for the curriculum used in Madrassas to be regulated to ensure rogue Muslim clerics don't use them to radicalize the youth. He also suggested MPs should set up special committees to check what is being taught in Madrassas if the need arises, adding that "education centers, be they secular or religious, must be accessible to our security people."

US Secretary of State John Kerry is due to arrive in Nairobi for a visit on Sunday (May 3) to hold talks with president Kenyatta and other senior officials on terrorism, the radicalization of Kenyan youth, and US support for Kenya in the war on terror. Secretary Kerry is also going to visit Djibouti.

Former American President Bill Clinton arrived in Nairobi on Thursday (April 30) with a 30-strong delegation for a four-day tour of Kenya to evaluate projects in health, education and climate change in which his Clinton Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative are involved.

Somalia

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, together with a large high-level delegation, arrived in Garowe on Tuesday (April 27) to attend the second round of the consultation forum between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal member States.

Prime Minister Sharmarke said at the weekend that the process to set-up an administration for the Central regions was underway and going smoothly in Adaado. He said "we hope to successfully conclude this soon so that we can embark on a similar process for Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle" Elders from Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle have been holding a series of meetings to discuss the issue.

Foreign Minister, Abdusalam Omar Hadliye, speaking on April 25, emphasized that Somalia had a warm relationship with Kenya, though he expressed doubt whether a wall along the border would solve security problems. He said Somalia believed the border should be open to allow trade, the movement of people, and the sharing of culture and education.

A three-day Stakeholders Forum, coordinated and funded by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), was held this week (27-29 April) in Mombasa, Kenya to review draft guidelines for the establishment of a Somalia Maritime Administration.

Interim Juba Administration's assembly members chose Abdi Mohamed Abdirahman as Speaker and Adan Khaliif Hajji and Abdi Baaley as first and second deputy speakers respectively in a vote at the weekend. The Jubaland Administration Parliament was formed on April 16 and has been officially recognized by the Federal Government.

South Sudan

The African Union Peace and Security Council has selected Algeria, Nigeria, Chad, South Africa and Rwanda, representing the five regions of Africa to participate in the IGAD plus peace process. This initiative will also include China, the Troika countries (USA, UK and Norway), the EU and the UN. Chief mediator, Ambassador Seyoum said no timetable had yet been set for the resumption of the next round of peace talks after consultations finished.

Sudan

Sudan's incumbent President Omer Al-Bashir was officially declared the winner of the presidential election in Sudan, He received 5,252, 478 votes out of a total of 5,584,863 votes (94.05%), according to results released Monday during a press conference held by the National Elections Commission. (See article)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon issued a statement on Monday (April 27) expressing his deep concern over the recent increase in attacks on peacekeepers serving in the joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Prime Minister Hailemariam launches World Malaria Day in Addis Ababa

Commemoration of World Malaria Day was held at Nelson Mandela Hall of the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa on Saturday (April 25) under the theme “Invest in the future: defeat malaria.” Organized by the Ethiopian Government, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the United Nations Foundation, the event emphasized the importance of continued investment in health and community systems. The theme also resonated with the Abuja Declarations and the AU Roadmap for shared responsibility and global solidarity to accelerate innovative domestic financing and ensure sustained and predictable funding to provide the impetus to defeat malaria in Africa and the African Union and African Leaders’ Malaria Alliance high-level dialogue for ending malaria by 2030. The aim included building continental support and global solidarity and sustaining commitments for keeping malaria high on the agenda to support the African vision to defeat malaria as well as adopt a continental campaign theme and engage influential platforms and constituencies, from young people to Heads of State and Government and create synergies.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam, the Chairperson of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance and Deputy Chair of the AIDS Watch Africa, delivered a keynote address, in which he noted that the leadership of the African Union Commission deserved the appreciation of the Ethiopian people and government for bringing key partners together to mark the commemoration of World Malaria Day. The Prime Minister stressed the event presented African leaders, actors and stakeholders with the opportunity to review progress, affirm commitments and address challenges related to the prevention and control of malaria. The Prime Minister said that Africa was poised to eliminate such public health concerns in the coming decade and urged African leaders to consider the importance of continuing investment in the fight against malaria to save more lives. He noted that the World Health Organization’s World Malaria Report 2014 showed a dramatic decline in the incidence of malaria worldwide and particularly in Africa. Pointing out that between 2000 and 2013 the rate of the morbidity and mortality caused by malaria had declined by 54% and there had been a 58% reduction of deaths of children under five, he said malaria control in Africa had been a major success story during the last decade. He said that countries, like Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa and Swaziland were now all but certain to achieve the malaria target of a reaching a 75% decline in the incidence of malaria, the Millennium Development Goal (number six). A number of others, including Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, were also expected to achieve a 50 to 75% decline in the malaria incidence.

Expressing Ethiopia’s own commitment to the fight against malaria, Prime Minister Hailemariam said national efforts were being targeted to achieve the 75% reduction for the Millennium Development Goal. He said **malaria related admissions had fallen by 81% and deaths had dropped by 73% for children under the age of five.** There had been no malaria epidemic since 2005. He added that the country’s achievements had enabled it to realize broad-based economic development including lowland areas where malaria was a particularly serious public health challenge.

The Prime Minister said Ethiopia, in the fight against malaria, had used a number of anti-malaria mechanisms including scaling up proven anti-malaria interventions and mobilizing communities to actively engage in anti-malaria campaigns. This in turn had helped the nation to achieve a high reduction in malaria-related morbidity, admission and mortality. The Prime Minister pointed out that Ethiopia had pioneered the push to universal coverage of mosquito nets and since 2005 the world had now distributed over one billion mosquito nets. He said Ethiopia was set to achieve universal, **100%, coverage of long-lasting insecticidal nets this year**, and he disclosed that the government had decided to launch a sub-national malaria elimination campaign in selected low transmission areas with the aim of expanding the national effort to achieve the vision of a “malaria free Ethiopia.” This would, he hoped provide a model for other highly infested countries and help lessen the malaria burden in Africa. The Prime Minister emphasized that “the transition from Millennium Development Goals to

Sustainable Development Goals should also sustain the gains we have made and move towards malaria elimination as advocated in our Africa 2030 Agenda.”

Prime Minister Hailemariam also underlined that leadership at the very highest level was still a critical factor in the long fight against malaria. He welcomed the fact that African leaders were fully committed to fighting malaria and pursuing the malaria elimination agenda; in January 2015, they had entered into their recommitment during the launching of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance 2030 Scorecard towards Malaria Elimination and of a Malaria Free Africa. He urged African leaders to be fully cognizant of the need to enhance domestic financing and attracting additional resources from potential partners to support this.

The Prime Minister, noting the continent was emerging from a protracted battle with the scourge of Ebola, cautioned that “as we strive to end the Ebola outbreak, we should not lose sight of fighting malaria.” He also underlined the need to strengthen the continental health systems in order that African governments could better respond to emerging health concerns, while at the same time keeping an eye on the fight against malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. In this context, he appreciated the role of **Community Health Workers** who were actively engaged in serving the people, especially in rural communities where, he said, the majority of the continent’s public health challenges were daily realities. The Prime Minister urged the African Commission “to steer the process of developing the African Roadmap for Malaria Elimination” and called on the African Leaders Malaria Alliance Secretariat, the AIDS Watch Africa and other partners to support the Commission in such efforts. In conclusion, Prime Minister Hailemariam said “let us work together to end malaria once and for all and boost our socio-economic development by fully seizing opportunities.”

Following the Prime Minister’s keynote address, participants deliberated in a plenary session on the aim of defeating malaria in Africa, and the African Union and African Leaders Malaria Alliance high-level dialogue to end malaria by 2030. In a bid to meet national, regional and international commitments to defeat malaria, key messages in the session included the promotion of national level ownership by governments, the private sector and civil society; mobilization of the necessary domestic and international resources; facilitation of national governments’ accountability for measurable results; promotion of continental and country decision-making processes; and undertaking wider information dissemination projects. The session was attended by high-level government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, bilateral and multilateral partners, international NGOs, members of the Malaria Consortium, of Roll Back Malaria, and other key stakeholders.

The US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs on the Ethiopia-US partnership

The US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Ms Wendy Sherman, spoke to *The Reporter* newspaper last week on Ethiopia and the United States’ bilateral cooperation. She also spoke of the fight against terrorism, concerns about Ginbot 7 and other terrorist organizations, the forthcoming elections and the general situation of peace and security in the Horn of Africa as well as the discussions she had with Ethiopian officials during a two-day visit to Addis Ababa (April 16-17).

Ms Sherman said Ethiopia-US ties featured continued dialogue, sharing of information, and growing and deepening cooperation on the three pillars of bilateral engagement: democracy and human rights; economics; and a security partnership on the basis of mutual understanding. She stressed that the US wished to help the Government of Ethiopia consolidate the good progress made in the economic sphere; and sustain their partnership in the field of security to ensure the people’s day-to-day lives are secure. She expressed her hope that the upcoming election would be free, fair and credible, stating that Ethiopia had shown improvements in its election process though, as a young democracy, there was still a long way to go to make certain that everybody’s voice was heard and ensure that opposition parties had a fair chance to be elected.

In reply to a question over her recent statement on the US’s readiness to work with the Ethiopian Government to address issues related to political groups’ which attempt to topple a democratically elected government, she noted that the Government of Ethiopia had identified the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) along with Ginbot 7 as terrorist organizations. She said this was a concern. The US was aware that the Government of Ethiopia had put labels on these groups as terrorist organizations but she said the

US had a different legal system and different thresholds as well as various evidentiary standards for identifying direct threats to US security. The US admitted that the Government of Ethiopia had identified concerns for all three of these groups, and she emphasized that “We want to...understand those concerns, share information where we have it, and make sure that indeed the process goes forward in an appropriate way.”

Ms Sherman said Ethiopia wanted to make sure that “we understand how Ethiopia sees these groups. And we do. What they want to make sure of is that we share information in law enforcement, in intelligence, in our diplomatic engagements. We understand Ethiopia’s point of view.” She underlined that the US, as a key partner to Ethiopia in various areas of common interest, appreciated the concerns presented to it. She said she knew that there were individuals linked with Ginbot 7 who resided in the US. In this regard, she reaffirmed that the US was fully committed to addressing the concerns raised by the Government of Ethiopia through appropriate channels.

Ms Sherman underlined that the US was willing to encourage a steady and sustained dialogue on all three pillars of engagement, and in reply to a question over Washington’s apparently contradictory statements with reference to its views on democracy in general and the elections in Ethiopia, Ms Sherman said she thought there were no conflicting messages from Washington concerning the democratization process. She said “we also have great hopes for Ethiopia,” and pointed out that her meeting with civil society members was a testimony of Ethiopia’s progress. She said it had a window of opportunity to see the emergence of “tremendous leadership in your civil society.” She said it also allowed her to witness people of courage who remained committed to solving problems and making their voices heard. She said these people were not “about overthrowing governments, they’re about solving problems and being advocates for people who don’t believe they have a voice.” She said that this attested to “the strength of a democracy” and added “we hope that those voices grow to be an even more institutional part of Ethiopian society.”

Ms Sherman noted she had discussions on South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and related concerns during her stay in Ethiopia. On the crisis in South Sudan, she noted that “strength always comes through partnerships” and reiterated that the US would continue to work with leaders in the region to find a resolution of the crisis. She said the US appreciated Ethiopia’s contribution to the IGAD-led mediation and urged the two parties to give peace a chance through a negotiated political settlement. She affirmed the US was committed to encouraging the parties to reconcile their differences and recognized the IGAD process as the way out from the crisis.

The US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs expressed her concerns over the threat of terrorist groups including Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Da’esh in Syria and Iraq. She said the US had formed a coalition of more than 60 countries to fight against Da’esh through military action, border security, countering violent extremism through social media, and the setting up of a legal framework to tackle foreign fighters returning home and creating trouble. She said the US was also working in this region, using the same tools to counter the threat of terrorism in the region. It has played a constructive role in supporting AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia in close partnership with Ethiopia and other countries.

Referring to Eritrea, Mr Sherman suggested Ethiopia and Eritrea should “work out their relationship with each other,” and said the US tried to be “a neutral force” in this regard. She expressed her hope that they would settle the problems surrounding their disagreement and said the US was supportive of resolving outstanding issues.

Ethiopia’s Compelling Rise: Lessons for Africa

The Brenthurst Foundation of South Africa published a short paper in April by Professor Dr Christopher Clapham, from the Centre of African Studies at Cambridge University, one of the UK’s foremost political scientists and a notable scholar of Ethiopia, and Dr Greg Mills, head of the Brenthurst Foundation and recent author of “Why States Recover”, a detailed study of why failed or failing states can be fixed by their own efforts. Their paper “Ethiopia’s Compelling Rise: Lessons for Africa” looks at the recent record of Ethiopia with the fastest growing economy in Africa over the last decade, and its range of infrastructural investments, supported by sound policies. It points out that Ethiopia remains politically stable, with a functioning and efficient government which has curbed corruption and reduced security threats in the country. The paper also notes that Ethiopia’s state-centric approach to development has exposed a number of shortcomings and the country has yet to create a productive private sector able to translate major infrastructural investment into the basis for a dynamic modern economy.

Nevertheless, it concludes Ethiopia possesses many of the ingredients for sustainable economic success, not least its own clear ownership of development plans and sees this as a key lesson for other countries.

Over the last decade, the paper notes that Ethiopia has emerged as one of the fastest growing, “perhaps the fastest growing,” economies in Africa. While this is something of an official mantra, independent appraisals still put it at over 10% from 2003 to 2013 compared to a sub-Saharan regional average of 5.3%. Poverty levels fell from 45.5% in 1995 to 29.6% in 2010. Growth, the authors stress, is driven by a “determined government policy of creating the conditions for development, notably through a massive level of infrastructural investment.” It mentions the plans for expansion of the rail network, with the railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa being upgraded at a cost of US\$4 billion by Chinese companies and the aim of 5,000 km of new rail lines across the country by 2020; the expansion of the domestic airline network, funded by commercial borrowing, though with government guarantees; the national fibre optic cable system to help improve one of the major weaknesses, in telecommunications; and the number of significant hydro-electric projects in addition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam whose US\$4.8 billion bill is to be met by the Government, financed in part through bonds and the people of Ethiopia and the Diaspora. Funding for these infrastructure developments are coming from improvements in tax revenue, some concessional financing from China and other donors, and domestic borrowing. The authors point out that local banks are required by government to convert up to 27% of their holdings into government bonds to finance infrastructure including GERD and this has created something of a local banking liquidity crisis.

The authors add “now the key question is whether Ethiopia can create or attract the level of private sector productive enterprise needed to turn this infrastructure into the basis for a functioning modern economy.” They quote State Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide, “success of our plans will now be determined by the response of the private sector. Investment is key in this. This process can’t just be led by the state which can’t itself generate wealth; it can only facilitate it.” He says Ethiopia “wants to be the light manufacturing hub of Africa” and the authors note that Ethiopian workers cost one-tenth the price of those in China, for example. There are six industrial zones now in Ethiopia, offering low or zero tariffs on imported manufactured goods, and tax holidays of up to seven years, with the Huajian Group’s ‘Shoe City’ in the eastern industrial zone, now employing 3,200 workers making 180,000 pairs of shoes a month, now joined by another 20 Chinese firms. Other light-manufacturing sectors developments include textiles from Turkey and construction materials from India, but the authors emphasize that considerably more is needed “to soak up the number of young people especially coming onto the job market.”

The authors make comparisons with Kenya which has similarly ambitious infrastructure aims, including the LAPSET Corridor, which will also link into Ethiopia. They note that both countries have young populations, with Kenya’s median age at 19 against Ethiopia’s 17. Both are highly dependent on agriculture. In Ethiopia it makes up half of GDP and involves 85% of the workforce; in Kenya 30% and 75%. Both countries run similar budget deficits, with levels of public debt equally high above 50% and relatively similar poverty levels. Kenya, of course, is the gateway to South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Congo in eastern Africa and its per capita GDP at US\$1,250 is more than twice Ethiopia. There are major differences in population and land area, but, the authors emphasize, the most notable dissimilarity “centers around security and governance”, and add “perhaps the most important reason for Ethiopia’s stellar growth performance is its political stability.” They point out that Ethiopia has a state that works “in striking contrast to many other African countries”. The government, they underline, has a capacity, shared by few African states, to make and effectively implement, policies. This, they point out, is most visible in the dramatic expansion in the road network and urban development in Addis Ababa, “now a megalopolis of some seven million people” but elsewhere in the country. Further education has likewise boomed, with over 30 universities geared especially to turning out graduates in engineering and natural sciences. Better governance also means less corruption and better value for money.

State Minister Shide says “We have a vision to become a middle income country according to a democratic development model, an activist state grounded by plans and a comprehensive development outlook ... and grounded in the party and in discipline. We are free market and open, but with caveats”. The authors note that quite exceptionally in Ethiopian history, there was a peaceful transfer of power within the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front to Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn after the death of the late Prime Minister Meles. They classify the internal operations of the government as opaque and use the word

“Byzantine” but then note that it gets things done and with a minimum of corruption. They sum this up as demonstrating Ethiopia’s ability to survive, as an island of stability within a highly troubled region, is a tribute to its ability to keep political control and to a foreign policy that recognizes the need for regional stability and seeks to be a moderating and stabilizing influence in the region. They note Ethiopia is a leading provider of peacekeeping forces to the United Nations and the African Union and its efforts to resolve conflicts in Somalia and South Sudan.

They note the continuing problem of Eritrea and the fact that its independence made Ethiopia a land-locked country but also add that this has actually proved much less of a hindrance to Ethiopia’s development than might have been expected with closer relations with Djibouti and the generally well run port of Djibouti and improved rail and road links. They also note the close liaison between Ethiopia and the effectively independent but still unrecognized Somaliland government in Hargeisa and the moves, led by the World Bank, to develop the Berbera corridor in a US\$1.8 billion scheme.

Inevitably the authors note that Ethiopia’s religious make up with 40% each of Orthodox Christians and Muslims, with the remainder Protestant Christians and indigenous religions. This requires delicate and complex management and as the Prime Minister says rent-seekers using religion as ideology have to be checked. Despite the mutual Somali link, Kenya has been the one affected by Islamists attacks. The authors suggest that the level of government control through its armed forces, competent intelligence services and the co-option of the domestic Somali leadership have helped Ethiopia avoid serious attacks, at least so far. The threat has been blunted by “rigorous security screening especially along the Somali border where Ethiopia has created a 100 km buffer zone with troops patrolling both sides.” They add “today those fighting terrorism could do with all the help they can get, but its assiduous careful planning and actions that can eventually, as Ethiopia shows, win the day.” Another important lesson Ethiopia offers revolves around the importance of ensuring effective integration of all sources of intelligence, and the need to generate trust in the army so people feel confident that they will be safe if they inform, and the military and police will use their information properly to protect them. The authors suggest the effectiveness of the kebele neighborhood association system helps. Overall, they conclude that “while it has a tradition of not sharing information with willing international partners, Ethiopia’s security sector is effective, using its capacity and resources to best effect, very little being squandered through corruption.” The integration of information from military, police, local government, development, administrative, and economic sources is a key requirement in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism intelligence.

The authors emphasize that this does not mean that Ethiopia has no development problems or security threats. They refer to “in-built suspicion of foreigners”, as in the prohibition on foreign banks, which makes consideration of long-term investment more risky; and there is the in-built suspicion of the excess profit motives, of “rent-seeking” in business. The authors point out that “there can be no question at all of foreign companies acquiring political influence, beyond their specific economic functions.” They underline that the Government does have a long-term developmental vision and it is looking for investors who will build and keep a stake in the country. At the same time, its policies often encourage investors into taking short-term actions to get quick returns. The authors conclude that Ethiopia has not yet really liberalized either its economy or its politics, but it has created space for the private sector within a state-dominated and regulated economy. They also argue that the relationship between government and external enterprises will change as the economy develops.

Ethiopia, with its strong government and still weak private sector, is a mirror image of Kenya which has a dynamic private sector and a more dysfunctional governance structure. Kenya is unable to translate private sector dynamism into public sector capacity because of problems of poor governance. The authors believe Ethiopia’s prospects look better for two good reasons: “it owns its recovery and its security.”

Foreign Direct Investment in Ethiopia is increasing steadily

Ethiopia demonstrates a vivid example of the narrative of the African Renaissance with a decade of double digit growth, political stability, peace and security and significant developments in a wide range of economic sectors. These achievements arise from the implementation of sound economic policies and strategies and have produced one of the world’s fastest growing economies. In addition to impressive internal resource mobilization for infrastructure and major hydropower projects, the country is also benefitting from substantially increased

foreign direct investment inflows which have contributed to technology transfer, employment creation and overall development. Foreign Direct Investment normally comes to places where there is real investment potential, both market and non-market assets and political stability. The Government of Ethiopia has also been focused towards clarification and establishment of an effective operating environment, the provision of priority areas of opportunity for Foreign Direct investors as well as the creation of institutional and legal frameworks for a number of years. As a result it provides ample opportunities for investors, offering a variety of packages of incentives and guarantees. Ethiopia is located in a highly volatile region with considerable conflict and instability in the region, but it is itself one of the most stable states in Africa and is frequently described as a hub of peace and stability in the Horn and East Africa regions. All this has certainly contributed significantly to attracting foreign investment and Ethiopia has become one of the preferred investment destinations on the continent today.

Fitsum Arega, Director-General of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, the country's investment agency, said this week that the Government expects this fiscal year to be a record for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) following successful efforts to attract overseas manufacturing companies. It will show an increase of 25% up on last year's US\$1.2 billion to reach a record US\$1.5 billion, and this figure does not include plans by China's Huajian, the world's biggest shoemaker, to invest an additional US\$2 billion to build its own industrial park and expand its existing Ethiopian workforce to 30,000 in the next few years. The UK's *Financial Times*, in an article this week, noted that only seven years ago FDI was no more than a little over US\$100 million. However, recent years had seen international companies locating factories in Ethiopia, and suggested they were attracted by low wages, cheap power and supportive government policies as well as the industrial zones set up to provide production facilities for textiles, leather and garments.

The Director-General said China was providing the largest number of investments, although by value the biggest investors were Turkey and India. He also noted that the country was now seeing investment from Europe and the US as well. He said Ethiopia was continuing to make significant investments in power, transport and industrial parks to provide substantial support for investors. Power and labor costs were low, security and political stability were good and the state-owned Ethiopian Airlines runs the biggest global network of any African airline. The Government has designed highly competitive and attractive benefit packages for investments and exports in priority areas. Among other incentives are customs duty payment exemptions on capital goods and construction materials and on spare parts whose value is not greater than 15% of the imported capital goods' total value. Tax breaks include income tax exemption from two to seven years for manufacturing, agro-processing and agricultural investments. There are also a series of export incentives, including the Duty Draw-Back, Voucher, Bonded Factory and Manufacturing Warehouse, and Export Credit Guarantee schemes. The Government guarantees the remittance of profit, dividends, principals and interest payments on external loans as well as provision of land at competitive leasehold prices.

The office of Accountants Ernst and Young in Addis Ababa forecasts that FDI inflows should average US\$1.5bn each year for at least the next three years. The company predicts the country will rank among Africa's top four manufacturing hubs by 2025. Ernst and Young said there had been a big surge in deals since 2011 from the US and Europe as well as China, Turkey and India. "Ethiopia", it says, "is fast becoming the 'must-visit' destination for virtually all private equity funds with an emerging market focus." There are now more than half a dozen private equity firms operating in Ethiopia. Recent arrivals include Europe's Unilever currently building a factory and India's largest paint-maker, Asian Paints, which entered the market through the acquisition of a local manufacturer last month.

Overall, Ethiopia offers major investment opportunities with competitive incentives in the major sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, mining, hydropower and social services. The maintenance of agriculture as a main source of economic growth, one of the seven pillars of the strategy of the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) emphasizes the prospects for intensification of marketable farm products - both for domestic and export markets. The Plan underlines the focus is a shift to produce high value crops with special emphasis given to high-potential areas, to facilitate the commercialization of agriculture and support the development of large-scale commercial agriculture. Major high value crops and potential areas for investment in the agriculture sector include horticulture, coffee, tea, rice, cotton, rubber and palm tree plantations, livestock, fisheries and forestry. The current Growth and Transformation Plan ends this year, but the next Plan, now being finalized, will continue these opportunities as it stresses moves towards greater industrialization.

The country's industrial development strategy has given substantial attention to boost and expand the manufacturing sector by building vertical and horizontal linkages between agriculture and industries, and establishing industrial parks tied to particular sectors and investments. These have been very successful and they continue to offer convenient environments for manufacturing as well as foreign private investment. Manufacturing, indeed, is playing a key role in development and hundreds of foreign investments from a variety of countries are now operational both in and out of industrial parks and benefiting from the sector. Investment opportunities in manufacturing includes textile and clothing, food and beverages, leather and leather products, cement industry, metal and engineering, agro processing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, glass and ceramics, paper and paper products, plastic products and building materials among other possibilities.

The fast growing economy demands increasing power and supplies of renewable energy and this offers considerable investment opportunities for domestic as well as foreign investors. Power production has increased steadily over the last ten years with 99% sourced from clean energy in the form of hydropower. The potential of Ethiopia's renewable and non-renewable energy resource still remains enormous with an economically feasible hydropower potential estimated at 45,000mw, the second largest in Africa. Ethiopia's installed generating capacity will reach 10,000mw when the current dams under construction come on stream. The private sector can participate in electricity generation from any source and without limit and hydropower, wind, geothermal, bio-fuel and solar power production all have great investment potential. Other areas of real possibility are tourism and the hotel industry, social services including health and education, construction services, mining and information and communication technology all offer substantial opportunities for investment. These are all complemented by the supportive, and continuously improving legal and institutional framework and investment and export incentive packages, that Ethiopia offers, positioning it as preferred destination for foreign direct investment.

Ethiopia has political and social stability, a growing economy, an excellent climate and fertile soils as well as offering strong guarantees and protection for investors. Ethiopia is ranked 55 out of 148 for security by the World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness Report, 2013-2014, well above most of its regional peers such as South Africa (109), Kenya (131), and Nigeria (142). Concerning its rate of economic growth, Ethiopia has grown at an average rate of 10% since 2010. In 2012, the World Bank identified Ethiopia as the 12th fastest growing economy in the world, faster than other African countries or even China and India. Coordinated, prudent fiscal and tight monetary policies, combined with the slowdown in global commodity prices, have brought down inflation to single digits. Consumer prices grew on average 5 to 6% in earlier years and "increased by only 5.7 %" said the International Monetary Fund last year, forecasting they would grow by no more than 6.6% and 5.5%, respectively, in 2014 and 2015.

Ethiopia has other advantages: it is the 27th largest country in the world by land size and with diverse topography and geographical location, it is suitable for the production of cereals, pulses, oil seeds, a wide range of fruits and vegetables, coffee, tobacco, sugar cane, tea and spices. It is the original home of coffee, of course, and is the world's 6th largest producer, as well as the 3rd largest producer of Arabica coffee. It is now the 4th largest non-EU exporter to the EU's cut-flower market and the 2nd largest flower exporter in Africa. With an estimated 43 million or more workers, it has the second largest labor force in Africa, and is the second largest domestic market in Africa with a population of at least 85 million. It is also a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) comprising 19 member countries and over 400 million people. Ethiopian products have duty-free, quota-free access to U.S. markets under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) and access to EU markets under the Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative. A broad range of manufactured goods from Ethiopia are also entitled to preferential access under the US Generalized System of Preference. No quota restrictions are placed on imports from Ethiopia for some 4,800 products currently eligible under the GSP.

The continent-wide links are through Ethiopian Airlines, which has won repeated recognition as the best airline in Africa. Ethiopian serves 17 domestic destinations and offers flights to 80 international destinations. As the largest African Carrier it carries two thirds of Africa's air freight, making Addis Ababa the main air transport center for the continent. As the headquarters of the African Union and UNECA and other organizations, Addis Ababa can also be classified the "diplomatic capital of Africa". Regionally, Ethiopia is also playing a leading role in its commitment to integration and interconnectivities laying down extensive national and regional

infrastructures to support industrial development and linking with Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan. A 5,000 km-long railway network is beginning construction with the first element the rebuilt rail link between Addis Ababa and Djibouti, due to open next year. Roads, water and power are other regional connectivity projects with Kenya, Djibouti and Sudan.

Given the highly conducive environment, and the significant unused and unexploited markets for investors, it is hardly surprising that Ethiopia is attracting more and more investors. Turkey, China, India, Sudan, Europe, USA, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Kingdom and Israel are now amongst major sources of Foreign Direct Investment to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's election campaign televised debates continue

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) has been continuing to feature its series of televised political debates between political parties in the run-up to Ethiopia's 2007 (2015) national elections next month on May 24. So far, five such debates have been held. The debates, following the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia's regulations as well as Code of Conduct for the Mass Media, have proved an effective platform for the political parties to show their aspirations, policies and programs on an equal footing with the view of attracting voters and raising the awareness of the electorate. The televised debates have also enabled voters to access comprehensive information from the political platforms displayed by the competing political parties since the debates began on March 13. They will certainly encourage voters to participate and allow them to make more informed decisions in the general election.

The debates have so far covered the Multi-Party System and Building Democracy; Federalism; Agricultural and Rural Policy; and Urban Development and Industrial Policy, and Good Governance and the Rule of Law and Infrastructure. The parties still have to debate the remaining three agreed subjects: National Security; Foreign Policy; and Education and Health. The debates have produced the reality of a competitive campaign by enhancing public awareness of the relevant political platforms and position of the parties.

Last weekend, the debate on Infrastructure brought together the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), Semayawi (Blue Party), the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK), the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and the All Oromo People's Democratic Party (AOPDP).

Workineh Gebeyehu, Minister of Transport, speaking for the EPRDF, said the remarkable achievements in the infrastructure development sector, people-centered and broad-based economic development and the continued and practical implementation of sound policies and strategies, were what persuaded people to vote for the EPRDF in the last four elections. Infrastructure development and strategic public enterprises were closely interlinked with the provision of basic services, economic growth, and social development, he said, and the EPRDF, which was determined to benefit and better the lives of the rural and urban populations, would not sell key public enterprises to investors. Equally important was the Government's determination to destroy rent-seeking, corruption and project delays, to ensure the provision of basic services, sustain economic growth and expand social development. Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, Information and Communication Technology Minister and Coordinator of the Economic Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, claimed that the Government's huge investment in infrastructure development was a central factor benefitting the country. He said opposition parties' calls to privatize state-owned infrastructure enterprises or strategic sectors were misleading. This would not serve the demands and needs of the people nor guarantee broad-based and pro-poor economic and social development. Selling public enterprises to investors will give no benefit to the people; the EPRDF's infrastructure development agenda was paying off in the creation of economic and social interconnectivity.

Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, pointing out that the Government's efforts to provide access to Information and Communication Technology services was gaining momentum, noted that there were now more than 30 million mobile telephone subscribers. He said ICT infrastructure has shown massive expansion, and the Government had delivered connectivity and specialized IT applications to schools, and *woreda*, Zonal, Regional and Federal institutions as well as interconnected and high performance networks to higher learning institutions and universities. The Minister noted that the Government had increased energy generation capacity from 370 MW in

1991 to over 2,000 MW in 2015 and this would rise to 4,000 MW shortly, meeting power demands from citizens, businesses and industries. He said the number of towns and urban areas with access to electricity now reached 6,000 and more than 50 electricity transmission stations were now under construction to ensure more reliable service and prevent power outages. The Minister also said the expansion of access to safe drinking water, by increasing water supply access by over 70%, was a remarkable achievement. He added that the Government had increased the country's total road coverage from 18,000 kilometers in 1991 to over 100,000 kilometers this year.

Ato Wondwosen Teshome (EDP) said the infrastructure development projects had to exhibit quality standards, sustainability and be free of corruption in addition to improving the living standards of the people. Such projects should also pave the way for the integration of the various regions of the country. He said to people's dismay, the EPRDF had failed to address project delays, inadequate access to drinking water, poor standards and corruption in the infrastructure development projects. He also emphasized that projects need to be linked to human development. If the EDP won the election, he said, it would direct the infrastructure development sector in such a way as to effectively address those problems and improve people's lives. Ato Amdom Gebre-Sellasie (MEDREK) claimed that the ongoing infrastructure projects were enmeshed in pervasive corruption and suffered from lack of longevity and poor quality as well as the absence of public engagement and consultation. The concentration of development projects in the capital, Addis Ababa, had come at the expense of the political, social and economic problems in other regional states. Rural-urban migration to Addis Ababa was surging and demonstrated the inequitable development. If MEDREK won, he said, it would make infrastructure projects the dynamo for balanced and fair development for all regions of the country. Ato Luelseged Degefu, (Semayawi), argued that the Government's infrastructure projects had no synergy and integration and allowed no space for public discussion and criticism. He argued that state-owned infrastructure enterprises needed to be sold to investors in order to improve people's lives. He said the EPRDF had failed to implement infrastructure projects as planned, pointing out that the plans to construct 2,395 kilometers of railway within five years had not even begun, though 70% of the Addis Ababa to Djibouti railway has been completed and it is expected to start operations next year.

The previous weekend the subject of the debate was Good Governance and the Rule of Law and the debate included representatives from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the New Generation Party (NGP), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), Semayawi Party (Blue Party), the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK).

Ato Abay Tsehaye, Policy Study and Research Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office, representing the ruling party, EPRDF, asserted that the ERPDF had produced remarkable achievements in the area of good governance and promotion of the supremacy of the rule of law during the last 24 years. He said this success was apparent in all sectors. He argued that the policies formulated and implemented by the EPRDF did not have limitations but the performance in implementing the policies had displayed both strength and weakness. Aster Mamo, Minister of Civil Service with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinator of the Good Governance and Reform Cluster, representing the EPRDF, claimed the party had taken reform measures in all areas of national affairs with the full participation of the people. This had resulted in tangible outcomes including the change from a centralized unitary state to an ethnic-based decentralized federal state. It had also produced a move from a command economy to a market-based economy as well as the institutionalization of a multiparty electoral system. She emphasized that civil service reform had been undertaken in order to furtherance the capability for an effective and efficient delivery of public services.

Ato Woldie Dana (NGP) said that the failure of the ruling party's performance in the area of good governance manifested itself in the inadequacy of clean water supplies and frequent power outages as well as problems with the telephone service. He emphasized that the NGP would comprehensively address the numerous problems related to delivery of basic public services. He said it would improve governance not least in setting the scene for improved service delivery, formulation of sound policies, effective implementation of projects and programs, and the resolution of other problems facing the civil service. Ato Wasihun Tesfaye, (EDP), claimed that any evaluation of the ruling party's performance in ensuring transparency, accountability and participatory democracy could produce nothing less than a verdict of poor governance. He detailed the EDP's views with regard to the ways and means to enable civil servants to function effectively and productively in the absence of any political influence or pressure. He added that the civil service should be guided by qualifications and performance instead of by the political choice of the ruling party as at present.

Ato Yidnekachew Kebede, (Semayawi), argued that the country's political architecture was faced with the absence of alternative media and of an independent judiciary. He claimed that the EPRDF had not addressed the problems which prevented the effective operation of the civil service and reiterated the necessity to give emphasis to the promotion of an independent and capable civil service. Ato Birhanu Berhe, representing MEDREK, stressed that the formulation and implementation of any effective national policies and strategies necessitated a national consensus. He said that if MEDREK won the upcoming election, it would put an end to the 1 to 5 groups which are organized within the civil service to discuss working practices and issues of productivity. It would also provide policies that would create key enabling conditions for every citizen to proactively participate in national affairs while also ensuring good governance.

Ato Diressa Terefe, Director of Capacity Building and Mass Media at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, told the Ethiopian News Agency last week that the political parties were now showing an ability to utilize the free airtime and space allotted to them more effectively. Overall, they were using more than 70 per cent of the time allotted. This was a marked change from previous national elections. Ato Demisewu Benti, Head of Public Relations at the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, said the Board welcomed the improvement displayed by the political parties in using the free air time allocated and hoped this positive momentum would be sustained for the remainder of the election campaign. He reiterated that the election campaign activities carried out by the political parties should be practiced in accordance with and abide by the Proclamation on the Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

Uganda's President describes Al-Shabaab as "toothless terrorists"

Writing last week in the Ugandan newspaper, *New Vision*, President Yoweri Museveni was outspoken in his views of the Somali extremist organization Al-Shabaab. He described Al-Shabaab as "a toothless terrorist group" despite its attacks on innocent civilians, including the football fans watching the World Cup matches at the Rugby Club in Kampala in July 2010, the shoppers in Nairobi's Westgate Mall in September 2013 and young college students at Kenya's Garissa University on April 2 this year. There were three key reasons for this: the sectarian nature of the group, the fact that it was now bankrupt both morally and ideologically, and ongoing proof that the group was now a defeated entity.

On the sectarian nature of Al-Shabaab, President Museveni said its attempts at targeting non-Muslims were only designed "to install seeds of sectarian divisions among our brothers and sisters on the African Continent." Referring to the nature of the group's recent attacks in Kenya, where in two instances "the criminals" killed non-Muslims and spared believers of Islam, he said Al-Shabaab apparently believed all Muslims supported its crimes. He said this belief was detached from the situation on the ground. He said there are over 2.5 million Somali Muslims in Mogadishu who choose to stay with, and stand by the African Union Peacekeeping forces rather than live under the rule of Al-Shabaab terrorists. He said the same story could be seen in other towns across Somalia, including Baidoa, Kismayo, Afgooye, Belet Weyne, Merka and many others.

Reflecting on history, President Museveni said the Somali people were part of the ancient Cushitic peoples of Africa, and he noted that segments of these people lived in Ethiopia, Kenya, southern Egypt and Sudan and other countries in Eastern Africa. In all these cases, remembering the fact that some segments of the Cushitic community are Muslims and others belonged to other religions, the President affirmed that the terrorists had no right to try to install sectarian divisions. This merely signaled their futile attempt to separate the Somali Muslim Community from other Cushitic peoples in the sub-region and, indeed, from the entire nation of Africa. He averred "the sectarian chauvinists are, first and foremost, the enemies of the Muslim people even before they become enemies of the generality of Africans." Stressing the peaceful mutual coexistence among all faiths and color of the peoples of Africa, and recollecting inter-African trade between Muslims and Christians since pre-colonial times, Museveni asked, "whose enemy are you when you interfere with this mutually beneficial arrangement?" Illustrating the long-standing symbiosis of both Muslims and Christians, Museveni recollected his own experiences as a rebel leader when he said he was always harbored in Kampala by Muslim comrades during the war against Idi Amin, a man who at that time was pretending to use Islam while in fact firmly ignoring the principles of the faith, not least through his alcoholism.

So, President Museveni emphasized, any targeting of all Muslims because of the atrocities committed by only a few was wholly pointless. Similarly, he drew a parallel between Somali's Al-Shabaab and the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army. He condemned the former for its divisive intent pursued in the name of Islam, and the latter for its attempts to encourage sectarianism under a semblance of Christianity. He argued that fighting a war on a sectarian basis is a mistake, even when you consider a section of the population to be oppressed. In this regard, South Africa's African National Congress guided the black people through the Freedom charter of 1955 not to wage a racist struggle against the whites who were oppressing blacks. This was because, among the whites, there were people who did not support Apartheid. He added "I saw many of them with my own eyes - Ben Turok, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, the Indians, the Coloureds all joined the struggle."

President Museveni said the eventual failure of Al-Shabaab also had to do with the fact that the group had become bankrupt both morally and ideologically. No good cause is attached to its terrorist pursuits. "Intoxicated with their bankrupt ideology of Islamic chauvinism (arrogance and narrow-mindedness)," he said they attack African peace-enforcing units in Somalia alleging that they are "Kaffirs - primitive people that do not know God, just like the European imperialists used to call us." The President said the fact is very different, as these peacekeeping forces are deployed in Somalia, not merely as "Kaffirs" but as peace actors, whose sole duty through AMISOM and under the flag of the African Union is to help their brothers and sisters in Somalia make a transition from war to peace. If Al-Shabaab had upheld a viable moral and ideological venture, he argues, it would have become involved when IGAD and the AU "wanted negotiations to include anybody that had been left out the interim government." Al-Shabaab, however, preferred to choose a destructive course aimed at destabilizing the country.

In all this, the President argues, Al-Shabaab has tried to suggest the peacekeeping forces do not belong to Africa. This again is indicative of its distorted moral makeup and ill-tuned ideology. If Al-Shabaab had ever tried to administer the country in good faith, it could have made efforts to enhance capacity at a time when large areas of Somalia, including ports and airports, were under its control. It didn't. Nor does Al-Shabaab uphold any elements of a disciplined violence or a just war. Now it only expressed a main aim of "killing non-combatants (shoppers, students, football fans, bar-goers like the ones of Kabalagala) or kidnapping people like Kony and Boko Haram do."

President Museveni says Al-Shabaab is now in a significantly vulnerable situation, calling it an already-defeated enemy. Following its defeats at Baidoa, Afgooye, Merka, Belet Weyne, Kismayo and other parts of Somalia, he points out it is now resorting to attacking soft and innocent targets, like civilians at shopping malls, football fans, university students and so forth, showcasing its eventual defeat. "Al-Shabaab is already defeated," he says, adding "the brutality they exhibit may scare people but it is defeatable and it is the last desperate card." The President said that "on account of the defeats [Al-Shabaab] "can no longer move in big groups - platoon size (30-40) or more - because they will be detected and destroyed by the Army. They can only move, by concealment, in small groups (4 or 5)."

And so, President Museveni concludes, defeated in both conventional and guerilla battles, Al-Shabaab has become vulnerable to the extent that it can easily be dealt with by Local Defense Units, though with some reinforcing by police and military. At the same time, President Museveni also noted the way to respond to the threat of attacks on 'soft targets' was to "harden the soft targets with the concept of the armed population" at least in threatened areas. He referred to the Armed People concept of Frelimo in Mozambique and said this could be reactivated in Uganda adding that he had "already given confidential instructions to the security agencies to launch the program, focusing initially on the most vulnerable areas in the country."

Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir re-elected with 94% of votes

According to the official results announced on Monday (April 27) by the National Election Commission, Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir won re-election with 94.05% of the vote, extending his period in office for another five years. The Commission said President Al-Bashir had received 5,252,478 out of 5,584,853 votes. The Commission Chairman, Professor Mukhtar Al Aasam, told a press conference that, as the candidate of the National Congress Party, Omar Bashir, had scored more than half of the correct ballots and therefore there was no need for a second round of voting. In second place was the candidate of the Federal Truth Party, Fadul Al Sayed Isa Shuaib, who received 790,779 votes (1.43%). None of the other 14 candidates in the presidential election

received more than 50,000 votes. President Bashir will take the oath of office for a third term on June 2, 2015. After the announcement of results, President Al-Bashir said he would work to meet the expectations of those who had voted for him. He said the transparency and fairness of the elections had dealt a blow to those who talked of a low turnout. He said those who boycotted the elections had exercised their constitutional right "because Sudan is free and its people are free.... whoever does not want to participate it is their right and we respect their opinion and we respect their position."

The results for the National Assembly election showed that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) won 323 of the 426 seats, with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) led by Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani taking 25 seats and the Federal Umma Party winning 15 seats. Independent candidates took 19 seats. The NCP also won 128 seats out of the 197 seats reserved for women in the National Assembly, with the DUP taking six of these and the Federal Umma Party three. The ruling NCP won 149 seats out of 213 seats for the geographical constituencies in the National Assembly. Opposition parties boycotted the election, claiming a widespread crackdown on civil society and the media had made it impossible to hold a fair election. The Commissioner said the reports of low participation were inaccurate, and the turnout had been over 46% overall, varying between 34% in Khartoum state and over 66% in Kassala state.

International responses to the elections, observed by a number of international bodies including the AU and IGAD as well as missions from China and Russia and other groups from Africa and elsewhere, were mixed. The European Union, United States, Britain and Norway all criticized the election, saying the lack of a promised national dialogue left Sudan without an inclusive political process. In Washington, a US State Department spokesman told reporters that "we do not consider the outcome of these elections to be a credible expression of the will of the Sudanese people" The AU and IGAD Observer missions expressed their satisfaction at the peaceful conclusion of the election.

The AU Mission, calling for Sudanese leaders to strive for genuine and inclusive national dialogue after the election, said the results of the election would reflect the expression of the will of the voters of Sudan. The Mission said there had been a low turnout of voters because major opposition parties and civil society organizations had boycotted the election. It said the security measures taken by the Government in some parts of the country had impacted on the quality of the process but the voting had been peaceful apart from a few security incidents. The Mission's preliminary statement concluded that the political dynamics of the process highlighted the fact that Sudan still faced serious challenges to democracy-building and national reconciliation. It recommended that the Government make sustained efforts to ensure electoral security at all times in all parts of the country, that the NEC reinforced training of its personnel to enhance implementation of electoral procedures, and that the National Assembly carried out legal reforms to enhance the independence of the NEC as well as the capacity and independence of human rights protection institutions. It also noted the importance of giving serious attention to the on-going conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and addressing these alongside the political and social dialogue.

The IGAD Election Observation Mission also confirmed the credibility of the election process, stating the elections were conducted in conformity with international benchmarks for free, fair and credible elections and in a transparent manner, taking into account the size of the country and the challenges of infrastructure. It said there was a major improvement over the last Presidential and General Election in 2010. The Mission said the overall environment during the election was peaceful with no major incidents recorded. It recommended the training of poll officials should be enhanced and that all parties involved in the election should encourage Civic Education especially among the youth and marginalized groups to increase awareness of the election process and its significance.

The head of the Chinese monitoring mission, Ambassador Tchang Chin, concluded that the election process was transparent, peaceful and in keeping with international specifications. He said the polling centers he had toured were well organized in a manner that allowed voters to cast their ballots in complete freedom. The Chinese diplomat urged countries of the world to respect international laws and conventions and not to interfere in the affairs of others. He said the Sudan was a domestic affair that concerned the people of Sudan and that "we categorically reject intervention in other peoples' affairs." The head of the Russian mission expressed his

"complete satisfaction" over the balloting process. He said elections had been proceeding according to international standards and "we did not notice anything contrary to that."

The Arab League mission said the election process had proceeded "in a good manner, in complete peace and transparency and without any violations." Ambassador Al-Hussein Malool, chief of the Sahel and Sahara (SEN-SAD) regional group described the Sudanese elections as "an example to be followed in Africa." He expected many African states to benefit from the Sudanese experiment. He said SEN-SAD was concerned about the progress of democracy in Africa. The delegation of the Arab Youth Council also reaffirmed "the fairness and neutrality" of the elections when they visited polling stations in Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North. A Council delegate from Libya said the Arab and African youth would like to tell Westerners that their rejection of the election process in Sudan was "unsavory" and "a reminder of the colonial era." He said the region's communities were "committed to the democratic option as the only viable instrument for the peaceful exchange of power." He did, however, add that they had noted the lack of adequate training amongst some of the election personnel which was reflected on insufficient knowledge about the election procedure among some voters. Mr Sirjil Togahama, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, said there had been a "small number of some voters in some centers" but they continue to turn out throughout the day. He said delays in the arrival of ballot boxes in some centers should be considered normal and praised the quick response of the elections officials to remedy such problems. Overall, he said, "the elections were conducted in a high degree of fairness and had proceeded in a good atmosphere." Mr Omar Al-Farouq, the chairman of the East Africa Journalists Union, said the elections were fair and free. "I have noticed, during my tour of the voting centers that the people were eager to vote and everybody was keen about that. That is their right."