



EDITORIAL

THE HORN OF HOPE

IQBAL JHAZBHAY

Since the previous edition of the *African Security Review*, four critical foundational initiatives of the African Union (AU) have come into effect.

In Addis Ababa, for the first time, representatives of the ruling and opposition parties were represented at the newly launched Pan-African Parliament (PAP); the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), with an able Commissioner, got to the chase by tackling key human security questions on the continent. Importantly, the move from the disquieting concept of “non-interference” to that of non-indifference of human tragedies, was introduced. Equally affirming was the foundational work for the establishment of the African Court of Human and Peoples Rights and, the civil society arm of the AU, the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). Correctly, the AU Secretary-General, Alpha Konare, declared that the AU is not the OAU.

Closer to home, as this edition of *African Security Review* was being edited, South Africa held its third successful democratic elections with a record number of election observers from Africa. In an unprecedented move, at least in Africa, the UN, the European Union and the Commonwealth stayed away from the South African elections in a show of confidence in the country’s ability to deliver a free poll. African election observers viewed posi-

tively “South Africa’s status as a force for strengthening democracy and good governance in Africa”.¹

Along with this up-beat continental mood, recently, the historic signing of a peace accord between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), mediated by Kenya, gave a ray of hope to the Horn of Africa². Hopefully, the people of this region will no longer carry the dubious distinction of hosting Africa’s oldest conflict.

The successful, yet fragile and little known transition to democracy in the north-western area of Somalia, now known as Somaliland, provides further hope to the Horn of Africa. Somaliland conducted district local (2002) and presidential elections (2003), under the gaze of key international observers, from countries such as Ethiopia, South Africa and Norway. One of Somaliland President Kahin’s first decisions was to appoint Edna Adan as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the most senior position yet held by a woman in any Somali government and in the Horn of Africa. All three elections were the first to be held in this region since the military coup of 1969³. Parliamentary elections in Somaliland are now scheduled for 29 March 2005.

The AU Chairperson, Alpha Konare, in his recent report on Somalia alerted the world with his resonating point that this new seces-

sionist state, "Somaliland has continued to experience relative peace and stability, compared to the other regions of Somalia" and "welcomed the continued stability of Somaliland".⁴ This report has a refreshing approach away from that of the clumsy diplomatic purgatory⁵, which encircles the Somaliland situation in all its irresolution. Clearly, amidst the brutish instability of politics, and the resultant pulverisation of the region's infrastructure, it is really the sheer political will of the people of Sudan and Somaliland to press on, that has led to the refreshing breakthroughs.

Fortunately, refreshing leadership that embraces the ethos of reconciliation, has put into place an emerging continental security architecture, which will do all that is possible to ensure that the bad echoes of history are not repeated.

The recent Darfur humanitarian crisis in Sudan, a bizarre debacle which could threaten Sudan's best hopes for peace in a decade, highlights once again that mistrust runs deep in Sudan. More sustained work by the government of Sudan will be needed to address the economic and political marginalisation of this region, which is fuelling discontent and conflict. International attention, including the visit of the AU chairperson, the South African led AU Post Conflict Reconstruction assessment team, the UN Secretary-General's visit and that of US Secretary of State, is a welcome sign in the constantly evolving tract of peace building, democratic consolidation and new ways of thinking and acting.

On a related front, Ambassador Kiplagat, Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) chief negotiator and special envoy to the Somali National Reconciliation Process, has his work cut out for him. In the coming months, Ambassador Kiplagat and his Nairobi team will attempt to establish a workable Somali Transitional Government. After some 18 months of negotiations in Nairobi, the AU has thrown the gauntlet by calling for targeted sanctions on any spoilers to this already foundering conference. Needless to say the critical test, judging from the previous 13 conferences, will lie in the quality of com-

mitment and political will of all related groups to implement stability and governance on the ground and, notably, to come to grips with the larger interests of the country. The emerging government of Mogadisho will do well to thread carefully in dealing with the functioning government of Somaliland and to preserve their hard earned peace and stability.

Against this backdrop, where creative ideas and commitment will be required, this edition of *African Security Review* could not be more perfectly timed. It is appropriately framed around the scholarly inquiries and holds a special treat, which will challenge policy makers as they grapple with possible political and diplomatic solutions in the Horn of Africa.

In this respect, Ian Spears, in his rigorously researched article considers the challenges African states present in terms of development and conflict resolution. He brilliantly examines both the arguments in favour of and against reforming Africa's borders, and recognizing new states. It argues that the current all-or-nothing calcified approach to recognition obstructs a satisfactory resolution of this debate. New and varied approaches to states and boundaries need to be considered. This article is of particular value to the Horn of Africa debates in Sudan and Somalia on succession and recognition. Spears concludes by proposing four approaches to dealing with dysfunctional African states. The effort and scope of Spear's work are evidence of the scholarly intent to explore an exhaustive and creative way towards nurturing stability and development. These are difficult questions, not best dealt with in tart formulas.

Matt Bryden engages the most ardent and emotive question among Somalis: that of Somali unity. Bryden offers readers insight into the roots of contemporary political realities in both Somaliland and Somalia. It serves to de-mythologize the sweeping conclusions so much in vogue, which has taken over thought and action concerning possible unity and dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia. With thoughtful analysis of realities and options, Bryden calls for urgent preventative diplomacy while the rare window of opportunity is open. He examines possible

models of integration and summarises the political dilemmas of Somali leaders, with concise acuity.⁶

Khalid Ali El Amin analyses the texture of Eastern Sudan's indigenous peace methods, in conflict resolution. This timely contribution adds to the scant literature on African indigenous peace systems. The humane engagement of the Sudanese Beja peoples provides us with another sparkling narrative of hope. This puts to bed the assertion that "No end is in sight to the crisis in the Horn"⁷ and, challenges the sweeping claim that "Until the Kenyan general elections of 2002, not a single IGAD member state had undergone a legitimate transfer of power".⁸

The valuable and excellent articles in this edition of ASR are likely to inspire more debate and more research among scholars and political activists, for whom the Horn of Africa holds a dear place in their minds and hearts. Sudan is scheduled to host the next African Union Summit in July 2005. That will be another appropriate occasion for us to reassess developments on the Horn of Hope.

Notes

1. See "Can Africa learn from SA poll?", BBC News, Thursday, 8 April, 2004. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3610911.stm>> and also the op-editorial "South Africa's Democracy & Its Implications for Somaliland", *The Somaliland Times*, Issue 118, Apr. 26 - May 2, 2004. <<http://somalilandtimes.net/2003/118/11819.shtml>>
2. The Horn of Africa comprises of Djibouti, Eritrea,

Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Somaliland, and Sudan.

3. *Somalia, The Untold Story, The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*. Edited by Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra. London: Pluto Press. 2004. page 221.
4. "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia", African Union, 29 April 2004, PSC/PR/2/(VI), page 11 point 44.
5. For more about this form of diplomatic purgatory, see Jhazbhay, "Somaliland: Africa's best kept secret, A Challenge to the international community", in *African Security Review*, Volume 12 (4), 2003, page 77.
6. Matt Bryden's earlier version of this paper was well received by scholars and diplomats at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) seminar "Somalia Peace Briefing", in Pretoria on 27 May 2004. A similar briefing by AISA on Sudan was arranged in February 2004. Another key South African round-table on: "The Horn of Africa: Understanding Somalia and Somaliland" was hosted by the University of South Africa, Institute for Global Dialogue in conjunction with the African National Congress (Kwa Zulu-Natal province), on 4 July 2003, on the margins of the African Political Studies Association Conference and of the International Political Studies Association's conference in the city of Durban. See also another South African initiative by the Institute for Security Studies: "Strengthening the Role of IGAD in Regional Peace Initiatives and Post Conflict Reconstruction" <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/CReports/IGADDec03/IGAD.htm>>
7. "Human Stability and Conflict in the Horn of Africa", Julia Maxted & Abebe Zegeye in *Peace, Human Security and Conflict Prevention in Africa*. Edited by Moufida Goucha and Jakkie Cilliers. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2001. page 49.
8. "African Security: Can Regional Organisations Play a Role?", Rok Ajulu in *Peace in Africa, Towards a collaborative security regime*. Edited by Shannon Field. Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue. 2004. page 273. Barring the mentioned sweeping claim, this article and the book provides useful analysis on the Horn of Africa.