

***ANALYSE 02/08***

# **Armed Movements in Sudan, Chad, CAR, Somalia Eritrea and Ethiopia**

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*February 2008*

Paper presented by Center for International Peace Operations, Berlin/Germany

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## Introduction

The region of the Greater Horn of Africa has turned into one of the largest and most violent conflict regions in the world. Five international peacekeeping operations are desperately struggling to contain the situation. In Somalia, the few troops of the AU mission AMISOM are hardly able to leave their barracks. UNMEE, the UN mission tasked to monitor the cessation of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea has just been forced by the government of Eritrea to withdraw its Blue Helmets from its territory. At the border between Chad, CAR, and Sudan, the joint EU/UN Mission EUFOR Chad/RCA is well behind schedule. And the new AU/UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur, UNAMID, is suffering from an even worse delay in its deployment.

The regionalization of the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa into a highly complex, interactive and disruptive system is caused by a variety of reasons, like in particular

- increasing scarcity of land and water
- tribalization of conflicts due to competition for these resources, failing state structures and manipulation of ethnic diversity for political purposes
- discovery of raw material deposits, in particular oil, stretching across borders
- the spill-over effect of the unsolved Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict into the region exacerbating the efforts of Khartoum's strategy to use destabilisation as a mean to ensure its dominance
- and - last but not least - a galloping proliferation of armed militia and rebel movements.

There is insufficient knowledge about these movements and their propagation. ZIF therefore has asked a leading expert on the Greater Horn, *Professor Gérard Prunier*, to analyse and depict this exploding diversity of movements in Sudan, Chad, CAR, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea with regard to their social and ethnic background, their political and military relevance as well as their leaders and the countries supporting them with arms and money. (The responsibility for the views expressed in this paper lies exclusively with the author.)

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***Director ZIF, Berlin March 2008***

## **I. Armed Movements in Darfur (Sudan)**

### **1. Movements**

In Darfur there are two main “families” of rebels: those of the *Justice and Equality Movement* (JEM) and those of the *Sudan Liberation Movement* (SLM). They are quite different. JEM is an almost exclusively Zaghawa movement with few combatants (perhaps 3,000 men) and a lot of money. The reason is that the Zaghawa make up only 2% of the population of Darfur but that JEM has strong links with Hassan al-Turabi’s legal political party, the *National Popular Congress Party* (NPCP), a split wing of the ruling *National Congress Party* (NCP). When the two split the Turabi wing retained control of most of the money and has used it – *inter alia* – in financing the JEM. As a result JEM has known few splits because its prosperous finances could keep it together. Its [almost] undisputed leader is Khalil Ibrahim. JEM has no foreign backer and it does not need one.

The SLM has an essentially Fur recruitment (its founder and still leader of the main faction, Abdel-Wahid Mohamed al-Nur, who at present is based in Paris, is a Fur). Since the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) it has exploded into a dozen shifting factions. The following are known to exist in early 2008:

- (1) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi* (SLM/MM): The faction exists since May 2006 and centers around Minni Minawi, an ex-rebel leader who is to date consultant of Bashir and chairman of the *Transitional Darfur Regional Authority* (TDRA). Minni Minawi has lost the better part of support by his commanders and the population since he signed the DPA.
- (2) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdel Wahid* (SLM/AW): This is the original movement created by Chairman Abdel Wahid Mohamed al Nur, founded in July 2006. The SLM/WA rejects the DPA and can therefore count on the broad support of the population. It is politically one of the most important factions.
- (3) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Khamees* (SLM/Khamees): Established in June 2006 by the former vice president of the SLM Khamees Abdallah (Masalit).
- (4) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Ahmed Shafie* (SLM/AS); also known as *SLM/Classic*: Exists since July 2006 and is led by Ahmed Abdel Shafie, a former founding member of the SLM. The SLM/AS rejects the DPA.

- (5) *Group of 19 (G19)*: Established at the end of 2005 by 19 commanders of SLM/AW which reject the DPA. In June 2006, the G19 began cooperating again with the SLM/AW.
- (6) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Unity (SLM/Unity)*: Founded in autumn 2006 under the command of former G19-members. In September 2007 several commanders of the SLM/MM joined the SLM/Unity after Minni Minawi`s signature of the DPA. The SLM/Unity shows the highest military presence in Darfur in late 2007; it has even extend its operations into Kordofan, central Sudan, and attacked the Chinese-operated oil wells in December 2007.
- (7) *Sudan Liberation Movement/Free Will (SLM/Free Will)*: Led by Abdel Rahman Musa who signed the Declaration of Commitment in May and has become a government minister in February 2007; relatively weak military presence; cooperates with JEM; almost exclusively Tunjur in recruitment.
- (8) *Great Sudan Liberation Movement (GSLM)*: Founded in January 2007 to protest against deficient support of the DPA.
- (9) *The Group for Development and Grievances* as well as *the Mother of all SLAs* are both splinter groups of the SLM/MM.

Apart from the Fur, important tribes in the various SLM groups are – by order of importance – the Massalit, Meidob, Tunjur and Dajo. In addition some anti-Islamist Zaghawa have gone over to the SLM factions because they are wary of Khalil Ibrahim`s turabist links. During the last year the SLM groups have been recruiting small numbers of southern Rizeyyat Arabs and even of Missiriya Arabs from the neighboring province of Kordofan. The trend has gathered further momentum in early 2008 and threatens the government`s operations in Darfur. This haemorrhaging of Khartoum`s Arab militias towards the guerrilla is one of the reasons for the attack on Chad in early February. Khartoum`s intention was to prevent the deployment of EUFOR, overthrow Déby and undercut Chadian support for the hostile realignment of Darfur Arab militias.

The various SLM factions together can command at least 12 to 15,000 men; but they are all financially broke which makes them very open to manipulation by outside forces, mostly by the Libyans, the Chadians and the Eritreans (more see p. 6 “Financing”).

Apart from JEM, SLM and the numerous split aways from SLM there are additional movements who are active in Darfur at the time of writing, some of them JEM splinter groups:

- (1) *The National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD)*: Founded in June 2004 by Jibril Abdel Karim Bari. The troops are armed and financed by Tchad. The NMRD was part of the *National Redemption Front (NRF)*, a loose military assembly under Khalil Ibrahim till its dissolution in mid-2007. (The NRF existed since June 2006 and was originally meant to include all groups which rejected the DPA. Tchad, Eritrea and Libya were known to support the NRF).
- (2) *The JEM-Field Revolutionary Command (JEM-FRC)*: Led by Mohamed Saleh Harba and established in the beginning of 2005, it merged with the NMRD at the end of the same year. Considers itself being the representative of the militant islamic wing of JEM; fusion with the Sudan Liberation Movement/*Ahmed Shafie (SLM/AS*; see below) in late 2007.
- (3) *JEM-Wing for Peace (JEM-WfP)*: Split from JEM in May 2006 during peace negotiations in Abuja under the lead of Abdelrahim Abu-Risha.
- (4) *Darfur Independence Front/Army (DIF/A)*: Group was founded by Mohamed Idris Azraq in August 2007. The DIF/A is the first movement which claims independence for Darfur.
- (5) *JEM-Collective Leadership (JEM-CL)*: Lead by Abdallah Banda und Bahar Abugarda and founded in October 2007.

In addition to these “active” Darfurian guerrilla movements, the “inactive” guerillas of the *Eastern Front* should also be mentioned because they could become active again at any time. The Eastern Front has two components. First, the *Mutammarr al-Beja* (Beja Congress) which is, as its name indicates, based on the Beja group of tribes, mostly the Beni Amer sub-tribe. The other component is the *Ussud al-Hurra* (Free Lions) which is an emanation of the Rashaida Arab tribe (the Beja are not Arabs, they are a Cushitic group closely related to the Somali but with a completely distinct language called Tu-Bedawi). During their fighting years (the Eastern Front combatants signed the Eastern Peace Agreement with the government in October 2006) both organizations collaborated with the Darfurian JEM which sent them a small “expeditionary Corps” of 800 men to fight at their side. The Eastern Front is poor and has few educated cadres. As a

result it has been completely controlled by the Eritreans. It signed the Eastern Peace Agreement because the Eritreans told it to do so. But there are now a lot of grumblings among the rank and file because the promises of Khartoum have not been kept and many combatants would like to go back to war. How and with what support, nobody knows. The Eritreans are not willing to support this return to hostilities and there are no other visible potential sponsors.

Finally, there are “ghost” movements said to exist in Darfur which need to be mentioned, i.e. the *United Front for the Liberation of Darfur* (UFLD). It was a conglomerate of five fractions of SLM plus JEM plus Ahmed Ibrahim Diraiige’s *Sudan Federal Party* (SFP). UFLD was cobbled together in June 2007 courtesy of the Eritreans. It was meant to be a fighting front, which would crack the whip and be nasty when Issayas would need to be nasty but which would also obediently go back into its polite shell when Issayas would need to play good cop. It did not work that way and the UFLD never actually took off. But it still exists as a “ghost” structure manipulated by the Eritrean Secret Service when it needs to raise some hell in Darfur *without* going through JEM alone, the reason being that JEM (which is now Darfur’s top fighting force<sup>1</sup>) is a political hot potato given the fact that:

- It keeps its own line of communication open with Idris Déby without going through Asmara,
- it has plenty of money, a second reason which makes it independent from the Eritreans (its recent offensives have been made possible through a large batch of arms purchases on the free market *with its own cash* over the last couple of months);
- it retains close links with Hassan al-Turabi and therefore has its own original political line.

Thus using UFLD lines of communication with the Darfur rebels is a way for the Eritreans to keep playing their little games *around* JEM. The minor SLM factions that were/are part of UFLD are poor and of course much easier to manipulate than chunky JEM.

## **2. Financing**

The Darfur guerrillas are either self-financed (in the case of JEM) or received moderate amounts from regional sponsors (Chad and Eritrea). In the case of the main Abd-el-Wahid an-Nur component of SLM they have also drawn resources from the fairly large Fur diaspora in the Gulf countries which has contributed money to the movement from their personal earnings. Given the extreme poverty of Darfur, there is no “business” base, either legal or illegal, for the guerrilla as

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<sup>1</sup> They have been besieging El Geneina for the past two weeks and shot down an Antonov An-12 transport-bomber. They are also the ones who have dispatched long-range commandoes to attack the Chinese-run oil wells in Southern Kordofan January 2008.

was for example the case with the UNITA fighters in Angola or with the Congolese rebels during the 1998-2002 civil war.

Regarding the SLM splinter factions there has been no constant pattern of support for any of them by either Tripoli, N'Djamena or Asmara. But all of them have received money or equipment at one time or another and all of them have also quarrelled with their erstwhile sponsors. The recent regroupments which have taken place after the November Juba conference were purely tactical alliances aiming at (a) achieving a minimum of coherence for the planned Sirte talks (b) getting some money from somebody. Since the Sirte talks have pre-aborted and since nobody seems willing to give them any money, it is likely that the "unified" factions will disintegrate again. The ones most likely to prosper are those which can bid for Idris Déby's support and serve as counter-guerrillas to attack the Khartoum-supported Chadian guerrillas now trying to overthrow the regime in N'Djamena (see Chad).

## **II. Armed Movements in Chad**

### **1. Movements**

There are three anti-Déby guerilla groups now fighting in Chad but we can expect more to spring up as the regime approaches collapse, and different people will want a tag of their name that will allow them to sit at the negotiation table:

- (1) The main group is the *Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement* (UFDD) led by Mahamat Nuri and Abbakar Tollimi. It is a mostly Gorane movement (the Gorane are the northern tribes of the Borkou/Ennedi/Tibesti region [often called BET], bordering on Libya). It signed the Gaddafi-sponsored "peace deal" in Tripoli in October 2006 together with the RFC. But Tripoli did not insist very much on implementation, thereby letting things slip into a return to war. UFDD might have 2-3,000 men.
- (2) The *Rallye des Forces pour le Changement* (RFC), the Zaghawa movement led by Timam Erdimi. RFC is an almost a family movement based on the Kobe Zaghawa clan and the Bidayat, who are closely related. Its leaders include several of Déby's close relative (two uncles and a cousin). Their geopolitics are of a most simplified nature: they simply want Déby out in order to take his place (Déby himself is from the Bidayat). The RFC enjoys a measure of support from Khartoum which is trying to achieve two things by helping it: (a) overthrow Déby who supports the anti-Khartoum Darfur guerillas (b) undercut the Zaghawa ethnic base of JEM by creating a pro-Khartoum Zaghawa armed group which



could then be used against the anti-Khartoum Zaghawa. RFC commands about 3,000 men.

- (3) The *Front Uni pour le Changement* (FUC) is led by Mahamat Nur Abd-el-Kerim [not to be confused with Mahamat Nuri of UFDD]. FUC is based on the small Tama tribe of Eastern Chad. It joined the government last March and Mahamat Nur Abd-el-Kerim became Minister of Defense. But then he refused to have his men disarmed and in October they re-entered a kind of armed dissidence, even as their boss remained Minister of Defense, which created an ambiguous situation. So Déby finally sacked him in November and his men have now joined the other fellows into the anti-Déby free-for-all.
- (4) The latest that needs mentioning is the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance Nationale* (FPRN) led by a former Chadian Army Colonel, Adam Yakub. They are small (perhaps 800 men) but they have attacked the regular army with quite a bit of success over the last weeks.
- (5) The *Convention Nationale Tchadienne* (CNT) which was led up to at the end of December 2007 by Colonel Hassan Saleh al Jinedi. The CNT was one of the organizations which signed the peace agreement in Tripoli in October last year and it had respected its signature. But with the general offensive now going on a subordinate of Colonel al-Jinedi, Colonel Hamid Abd-el-Kader, decided that it would be a good idea to join the fray and deposed the boss in order to launch an attack on the Army. CNT has about 1,000 fighters
- (6) Then there is *Mouvement Populaire pour la Renaissance et le Développement* (MPRD) led by Colonel Djibrine Dassert. It is an ethnically mixed movement with a Gorane leadership and a Southern rank-and-file with about 500 men. They re-started fighting late 2007.
- (7) The *UFDD fondamentale* is a splinter group from Mahamat Nuri's UFDD led by Abd-el-Wahid Makaye with about 500 men. They had also signed the October 2006 peace agreement but broke it in late December 2007.

At the beginning of January 2008, the UFDD, UFDD Fondamentale and RFC have decided to unite to fight better Déby. Their Chief of Operations of this *National Alliance* is Colonel Fizani, a protégé of Mahamat Nuri. All the above –mentioned fronts have combined their efforts in early February to try overthrowing President Idris Déby and they are all fighting at present in the East

and in and around the capital N'Djamena<sup>2</sup>. The two conflicts – Darfur and Chad – have now in fact merged since:

- several groups of JEM combatants crossed Chad all the way to N'Djamena to help Déby fight off the Chadian rebels;
- reinforcements for the Chadian rebels sent from Darfur have been managed directly by the Sudan Armed Forces command;
- these reinforcements for the battle in N'Djamena were intercepted and attacked inside Chad by Darfurian rebels trying to help Idris Déby.

## **2. Financing**

All the Chadian rebel groups are 100% financed by Khartoum.

## **III. Armed Movements in the Central African Republic**

### **1. Movements**

There are no “proper” guerilla groups in the Central African Republic. The operations in the North (around Birao) have been carried out by loose collectives of Sara groups which used to support former president Felix-Ange Patassé (overthrown by General François Bozizé in a coup in 2003). These men, who are vaguely politicized bandits, exist only inasmuch as they get money from Khartoum. The reason for Khartoum to have supported them is that Patassé was pro-Khartoum while Bozizé, who has been helped into power by Idris Déby, is rather anti-Khartoum. Khartoum’s idea was to re-overthrow the Bozizé regime and bring back their friend Patassé. It did not work because the French sent about 600 men who blasted the rebels to pieces and stopped the guerilla which lacked any serious popular base. Bozizé is now trying to “negotiate” with the rebels but he cannot manage to do so because they are so flaky that nobody is capable of speaking as a “serious” rebel and therefore of delivering the peace. It is to such a point that Bozizé recently went to Khartoum and asked the Sudanese to help him identify *who* it was that he was fighting against, in order to be able to talk to them.

In the CAR, something a bit less shapeless than a gaggle of brigands is the *Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et de la Démocratie* (APRRD). They are a bunch of former Patassé army officers who have raised some rebels from the thieves who set up roadblocks in the North

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<sup>2</sup> In late March, the so-called *Union of Forces for Change and Democracy* (UFCD), originally a breakaway of the UFDD joined the National Alliance. The UFCD is headed by Adouma Hassaballah, the former right hand of General Mahamat Nouri and numbers some 2.000 men.

(*les coupeurs de routes* or *Zaraguina* in local parlance). They have support from the Sudanese Secret Service for the simple reason that President Bozizé was put in power with Déby's help and has remained his close ally. So on the principle that enemies of my enemy's friend should also be my friends, the Khartoum boys help the "APRRD" even if it is not much of an "organization".

## **2. Financing**

The CAR guerrillas are mostly self-financed through acts of banditry. They receive a small amount of support from Khartoum.

## **IV. Armed Movements in Somalia**

### **1. Movements**

The *Union of Islamic Courts* (UIC) has disappeared as a separate independent organized force since the December 2006 Ethiopian military operation. It was in any case a complex organism made up of the fusion of several locally-based *shari'a* tribunals, each one having its own militia. These various militias had in fact never fused and each had retained its own military commanders, weaponry and power base. 90% of these court-based militias were in Mogadiscio town proper, the movement having very little base outside the capital before it took power there in May 2006. Today there are two opposition forces which are loosely organized:

(1) The *Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia* (ARS) which is largely a tool of Eritrea (it has been founded through a conference there in September 2007 and is based in Asmara). Its Secretary General is Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the former UIC [moderate wing] leader. It has assembled the majority of the ex-UIC, with a distinctly moderate flavour.

(2) The extremists (Hassan Daweyr Awys, Muktar Ali Robow, Aden Hashi Ayro, Hassan Ali Turki) have rather gone with the *Shebab al-Islami* (Islamic Youth). The relations between the two groups are so poor that the *Shebab* killed Salah Ali Saleh "Nabhan" (one of the three guys on the CIA most wanted list) in September this year because he had joined the ARS.

It is completely impossible to know how many men each of these groups have. The support for the ARS is 100% Eritrean while the support for the *Shebab* is *al-Qaida*.

On the other side the Ethiopians have about 25,000 soldiers in Somalia and the *Transitional Federal Government* (TFG) has perhaps 7 to 8,000. Most of those are Majerteen from Puntland who have been mobilized personally by the Somali president Yusuf Abdullahi. It is the Ethiopians who bear the brunt of the fighting. The 1,600 Ugandan Peacekeepers of the *African Union Mission to Somalia* (AMISOM) are completely irrelevant to the situation in military terms. They just remain holed up in their barracks, go for short trips outside and hope not to get shot. General Katumba Wamala had in fact brokered a pact of non belligerence with the *Shebab* which has been broken only in January when the *Shebab* attacked the Ugandan base. The Burundi armed forces which have sent a few hundred men within the same AMISOM framework as the Ugandans, have been equally useless.

## **2. Financing**

During the short period when the UIC was in power (May to December 2006) there were interesting developments in patterns of financing.

- The Iranians picked up some “prospects” and gave them money, feeling their way very carefully to find out who could be a good candidate for conversion to Shiism<sup>3</sup>.
- The Pakistani came up with money and guns. But it was not the Pakistani “government” as such, it was the pro-Taliban faction of the Pakistani Military Intelligence. They chose Aden Hashi “Ayro” (i.e. the most radical group among the *Shebab*) as their darling boy.
- The Egyptians also came up with money. But contrary to the Pakistani they were careful to try to find the most moderate (i.e. not very religious) members of UIC and the most nationalist (i.e. anti-Ethiopian) ones. On these two counts they collaborated closely with the Eritreans. Their man was Sheikh Sharif and, to a lesser degree, Hassan Dawer Aweys.
- The Saudi also came up with money. But their choice was to find old “graduates” of Saudi religious schools with a definite *Wahabi* slant.
- The Eritreans were ready to help anybody but they had more of a direct military role than a political one and no real independent financing capacity. The various Muslim players were playing their separate game (at times *against each other*) and just giving some money to the Eritreans to buy guns with.

But all this changed completely after December 2006. The Eritreans created the ARS and funneled all the moderate Arab money (i.e. Saudi and Egyptian mostly, but by then with a small

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<sup>3</sup> This is a general policy these days. In the Sudan they have quietly tried to woo a number of *Mutammarr al-Watani* cadres (both the Beshir and the Turabi factions) towards Shiite involvement.

Yemenite contribution after Ali Abdallah Saleh decided to reconcile himself with Issayas at Khartoum's behest) to either the ARS or to some moderates still fighting in Mogadiscio. The Pakistani disappeared and gave way to direct *al-Qaida* financing for Ayro's *Shebab* fraction<sup>4</sup>. The Iranians seem to have vanished from the scene.

## V. Armed Movements in Eritrea

### 1. Movements

There is no big centralized organized anti-Issayas, i.e. anti-government organization. Rather the Ethiopians have managed to create a kind of "federation" (*National Alliance of Eritrean Forces* or NAEF) composed of about fourteen different opposition movements which include the *Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement* (EIRM) and the *Eritrea Democratic Alliance* (EDA).

But this "federation" is of extremely dubious efficiency which is why the Ethiopians have created on the side another organization, the *Eritrean Revolutionary Democratic Front* (ERDF) which is in fact a big sounding name for a kind of fighting commando. NAEF can be considered as a political movement while ERDF is a military one. NAEF is kind of "official" and its leaders – the veteran former ELF leader Abdallah Idris and the hapless Heruy Tedla Bairu – are known. But they have no fighting strength. The ERDF is the opposite: it is an almost secret organization with no known leaders and it is more an Eritrean Foreign Legion of the Ethiopian Army than a real political movement. It is just supposed to give a kind of "political local cover" for the Ethiopians the day they would have to fight Eritrea, more or less the way Kabila's *Allied Democratic Forces for a Liberation of Kongo-Zaire* (ADFL) gave a local Congolese cover to the Rwandese Army in 1996. There is no way of knowing the ERDF's military strength.

*Jihad Eritrea* has been inactive since about 2002, when the Eritreans started their rapprochement with Khartoum. As Khartoum saw that it had to get on Issayas' good side in order to limit his nuisance capacity in Darfur (Issayas had organized the first big weapons delivery to the then unknown SLM in Darfur back in 2001-2002), the boys around Beshir reined in *Jihad Eritrea*. In exchange for which Issayas put the brakes on his help to the SLM; but never completely. He always kept some measure of help to the SLM exactly for the purpose of neutralizing *Jihad Eritrea*. His tactics have worked pretty well. The last time there was a skirmish with *Jihad Eritrea* was about six months ago and the Khartoum authorities quickly put an end to it as Issayas

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<sup>4</sup> Ayro is quite anti-Eritrean and refuses to collaborate with the ARS which he judges dangerously secularist in outlook (see in my main text the part about the murder of "Nabhan").

threatened to renew his support not only to the Darfur fellows but also to the Eastern Front as well (see Sudan).

Then there is a very small Afar organization, the *Afar Red Sea Front*, which is a leftover from the 1998-2000 war when the Ethiopians created it to act as an auxiliary force in case they wanted to attack Assab. After the end of the war they were left to their own devices but not demobilized. They have only a few hundred boys but they could fairly quickly get a couple of thousand if the money was there (everybody has got a gun). Last October they raided a small Eritrean garrison outpost halfway between the Ethiopian border and Assab, killing the commander. It seems that this raid was fairly spontaneous but somehow “authorized” by the Ethiopian military who wanted to test the solidity of the Eritrean defenses. The result was clear: This was very reassuring for the Ethiopian military because it meant that in case of open conflict their Eastern Front (i.e. fighting into Dankalia towards Assab) would be “easy” to handle.

## **2. Financing**

All Eritrean rebel movements have been so far 100% financed by Ethiopia. Of late they have managed to mobilize a small amount of remittances from the Eritrean diaspora in the US which is getting desperate when it sees the absolute dictatorship imposed on Eritrea by President Issayas Afeworqi.

# **VI. Armed Movements in Ethiopia**

## **1. Movements**

There are two big organizations and a couple of smaller ones. The biggest organization is the *Oromo Liberation Front* (OLF) which is a “classical” politico-military front, dating back to the days of the anti-Derg struggle. But it is much diminished in military strength if it is compared to these days. Its strength was of almost 14,000 men in 1991 cannot today be estimated at barely more than about 5,000. Its whole Eastern wing which was active in the Muslim part of Oromiya is now either dead because it was either sucked in the *Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromiya* (IFLO) back in the late 1980s and that IFLO then disintegrated in the early 1990s, or else it became largely inactive. Many of IFLO’s men in the Muslim areas have seeped down into the Ogaden and joined the *Ogaden National Liberation Front* (ONLF) (see below).

The parts of the country where the OLF has retained a semi-permanent strength is in Wollega (West), among the Lutheran communities there (Mekane Yesus Church remains suspect of pro-OLF tendencies) and in southern Sidamo, down by the Kenyan border (OLF forces often cross into

Kenya when they are on the run and there have been instances of Ethiopian troops going after them in hot pursuit into Kenyan territory).

OLF has a solid support from Eritrea and some of its men have been dispatched to Somalia on orders from Asmara during the short UIC interlude. They were killed or had to flee when the Ethiopians invaded in December 2006. But most of them simply moved over the border into the Ogaden and started to operate with the ONLF. The "official" leader of the OLF is Daoud Ibsa but the organization is in fact led by a [confused] collective leadership where historical leaders like Leenco Letta and Galasa Dilbo retain influence. Its main diaspora groups are those in Germany, the US and Canada. The organization can be said to be in crisis.

The other big front is the ONLF. Created in 1986, it is the direct heir of the *Western Somalia Liberation Front* (WSLF) which disappeared in 1984. For the first seven years of its existence the ONLF was a guerilla group. It became a political party in 1991 (like the OLF) and for three years had a legal existence before sinking back into clandestinity after falling out with the *Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front* (EPRDF). Its main clan base is made of the Southern Ogadeni clans like the Aulihan, Mohamed Zubeyr and Rer Ugas. The Northern Ogadeni clans (Rer Barre, Jidwak, Shekash) and the non-Ogadeni clans living in Ogaden (Hawiye, Dolbahante, Issaq, Issa, Gurgura, Gaddabursi) have often been anti-ONLF. The Ethiopian state is at present recruiting anti-ONLF militias among those. The ONLF Secretary General is Sheikh Ibrahim Abdallah and his Deputy Chairman is Mohamed Ismail. Both are based in Europe, shifting between the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany. At present the organization can probably muster about 8,000 combatants and it is growing. Their main support comes from Eritrea.

Apart from those there are smaller rebel groups in Ethiopia. The biggest of these small ones being arguably the *Ethiopian Popular Patriotic Front* (EPPF). The EPPF is 100% Amhara and operates around Gondar. It has perhaps 5-600 fighters and it receives help from Eritrea. A good part of its financing comes from the Ethiopian diaspora in the US. Being a close-to-the-ground peasant organization it has no known leadership. It has received military guidance on and off from Oromo officers who had deserted the Ethiopian Army, gone to Eritrea and then been "recycled" by the Eritreans as military advisors to the EPPF.

Another small group (perhaps 400 men) is the *Tigrean National Alliance for Democracy* (TNAD) led from Asmara by TPLF veteran dissident Aregawi Berhe. This is a paradoxical guerilla because it belongs to the very same ethnic group which is the mainstay of the TPLF group in power in Addis Ababa. So it plays on the intra-regional differences within the Tigreans i.e. Adigrat versus Axum and Meqelle. It can exist only because of Eritrean money.

Then there are small and confused Afar guerilla groups like *Ugugumo* (“revolution” in Afar) which dates back to the days of the Derg and the *Afar Revolutionary Democratic Front* (ARDUF) and which was also created during the Derg but *against it* (Ugugumo was pro-Derg). Both have survived as shadowy organizations oscillating between legalization (Mahmooda Gas, the ARDUF founder, is State Secretary for Tourism and leads a legal branch of ARDUF) and vague guerilla groups (those who kidnapped the tourists in Dalol six months ago were a gaggle of Ugugumo and ARDUF fighters with Eritrean backing). They have a few hundred “fighters: (who don’t fight very much) but they could mobilize ten times that amount if they found a solid political/financial backing.

## **2. Financing**

All these groups exist mostly on three sources:

- (1) Remittances from the various diasporas, strictly along ethnic lines, with the US diaspora usually being the biggest contributors;
- (2) Eritrean money;
- (3) Banditry and local peasant taxation on a limited scale.

## **Conclusion**

All these groups are pretty informal and in no way resemble the well-organized guerilla movements of the Communist era. The degree to which they can draw on a reservoir of goodwill varies enormously. Some like the Somali *Shebab*, the Ethiopian *Oromo Liberation Front* (OLF) or the various strands of the Darfurian *Sudan Liberation Movement* (SLM) have a very large potential in terms of popular support. Others, like the Chadian guerilla groups, are narrow tribally-based organizations without much outreach.

Also “tribally-based” has to be seen in relation to what that particular “tribe” is. Thus the Oromo in Ethiopia are over 25 millions while in Chad the Tama who constitute the tribal base of the *Front Uni pour le Changement* (FUC) are probably less than 50,000. Calling both “tribes” is like calling both Russia and Moldova “countries”. The same goes for the solidity and durability of the organizations. The OLF has existed for thirty years and is unlikely to go away. Some of the small Chadian groups were created last year and might be gone by the next.

The various guerrilla groups in the Horn are of completely variable importance and capacity for political change, running from completely foreign-financed and guided like the Chadian groups to micro highly-nationalist groups with almost no foreign surface like the smaller Ethiopian



groups. Paradoxically it is often those groups with the smallest social base – like the Chadian groups – who have the greatest potential for military impact. In such cases they can almost be seen as foreign mercenaries. On the opposite, deeply socially rooted groups like the Darfur guerrillas have only limited military potential, but an enormous political potential should things turn against the government.

In sum, many of the Horn guerrillas can be seen as military jokers in a confused pack of political cards, vague shadowy silhouettes one day and the next day fighting in the capital as was the case in N`Djamena during the first week of February 2008. The result is that the Horn can be considered as an extremely volatile political environment.

## Acronyms

ADFL	Allied Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Kongo-Zaire
APRRD	Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et de la Démocratie
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Front
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
ARS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
CNT	Convention Nationale Tchadienne
DIF/A	Darfur Independence Front/Army
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EDA	Eritrea Democratic Alliance
EIRM	Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement
EPPF	Ethiopian Popular Patriotic Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERDF	Eritrean Revolutionary Democratic Front
FPRN	Front Populaire pour la Renaissance Nationale
FUC	Front Uni pour le Changement
G19	Group of 19
GSLM	Great Sudan Liberation Movement
IFLO	Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromiya
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
JEM-CL	JEM-Collective Leadership
JEM-FRC	JEM-Field Revolutionary Command
JEM-WFP	JEM-Wing for Peace
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
MPRD	Mouvement Populaire pour la Renaissance et le Développement
NAEF	National Alliance of Eritrean Forces
NCP	National Congress Party
NMRD	The National Movement for Reform and Development
NPCP	National Popular Congress Party
NRF	National Redemption Front
RFC	Rallye des Forces pour le Changement
SFP	Sudan Federal Party

SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SLM/AS	Sudan Liberation Movement/Ahmed Shafie
SLM/AW	Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdel Wahid
SLM/Free Will	Sudan Liberation Movement/Free Will
SLM/Khamees	Sudan Liberation Movement/Khamees
SLM/MM	Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi
SLM/Unity	Sudan Liberation Movement/Unity
TDRA	Transitional Darfur Regional Authority
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNAD	Tigrean National Alliance for Democracy
UFCD	Union of Forces for Change and Democracy
UFDD	Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement
UFLD	United Front for the Liberation of Darfur
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
WSLF	Western Somalia Liberation Front