

PEACE AND SECURITY

# WIND OF CHANGE

Assessing Positive Developments in the Horn and Their Impact on Regional Peace and Security

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An unprecedented wind of change is blowing in the Horn of Africa and this has created hopes, expectations and anxieties simultaneously. The transformations include the changes in Ethiopia, the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the changes in the Sudan and a new integration framework between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.



Since regional cooperation, through IGAD has yet to play an important role both in terms of regional integration and in formulating a joint position on issues of mutual concern, the Gulf has secured its position, but at times undermines the democratic changes and relations between the Horn and other parts of the continent.



For peace and democratization to be sustainable, a serious reviving of regional cooperation within IGAD thus remains crucial.



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# INTRODUCTION

An unprecedented wind of change is blowing in the Horn of Africa and this has created both hopes and expectations, but also anxieties. Developments have included the changes in Ethiopia and the ensuing rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the recent changes in the Sudan following the ousting of President al-Bashir from power, a new integration framework in the Horn between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, and the recent agreement between the Transitional Military Council and the protesters (represented by the Forces for Freedom and Change, FFC) in the Sudan to establish a united civilian government in the country. These developments have been a source of hope as well as anxiety in the Horn of Africa. The dispute over Ethiopia's use of the Nile waters and the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (the biggest in Africa)—during the development of which Sudan has been intentionally ignored as the project stands to benefit the country with its extensive agricultural potential—has resulted in struggles between key actors in the Gulf, the spread of the problem to the Horn, as well as monetary opportunities, and major opposition from Egypt. All of this is now also impacting the Horn of Africa.

There is a changing world order. And while the changes happening in the Horn are positive and indeed welcome developments, at the same time there are worrying trends which have considerable consequences for the Horn and beyond due to the new fault lines developing in the region. It is of the essence that these fault lines are fully understood and given serious attention if the aforementioned positive trajectory is to be sustained.

The protests that sparked political change in Ethiopia had persisted since 2015, following a sweeping victory of the ruling coalition party in national elections. The protests triggered a reaction and recognition that change was necessary within the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), forcing the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam and the appointment by the EPRDF of a new Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed. Although the former Prime Minister was claimed to have willingly stepped down, sources within the coalition indicate that he was forced from power by his own party, the SEPDM. Obviously, Hailemariam had to resign because he was unable to manage the situation, and this was the final episode in a three-year decline of his insignificant authority.

The EPRDF took total control of the government following the May 2015 election, but the protests were built on the outcome of the 2010 elections and the discontent that emerged due to the lack of space for opposing political views within the governance structures. The EPRDF leadership saw the sweeping victory as the triumph of revolutionary democracy over other ideologies. But following the 2015 elections, a conflict emerged among the EPRDF coalition members, particularly when there was a change of guard within one of the coalition parties, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), in 2015 and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) tacitly questioned this. This triggered resentment among the leaders, which led to a resistance within the EPRDF, exacerbating the protest movement against the center. This OPDO resistance, in collaboration with others opposing the EPRDF's domination by the TPLF, had the capacity to mobilize through social media, eventually forcing a reconfiguration of the EPRDF balance of power.

The leadership of the OPDO having allied itself with the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) imposed a change of leadership within the EPRDF, which eventually helped quell the protests. This brought a major shift of power from the north to the south of Ethiopia. New realities that emerged within the party had serious consequences, including hindering the smooth functioning of the coalition since internal trust had been seriously, possibly irreversibly undermined.

For the first time in the party's history, the EPRDF leadership that came to power was elected by a majority vote secured through an alliance of two parties, thus abandoning the consensus-based culture within the party. The new government that came to power in Ethiopia raised popular issues, garnering the support of the general public, which helped it consolidate and counteract opponents within the EPRDF. This raised more questions within the ruling coalition as to whether the emerging leaders were planning to change the modus operandi of the coalition. At the same time, the immediate release of prisoners, the permission granted to all armed groups to return to the country, as well as rapid changes, including making it possible to privatize state-owned enterprises, were welcomed by internal stakeholders and the international community. The changes in the country have had undeniably positive implications

for the entire Horn of Africa. However, it may now be time to look at the overall situation more critically. Of course, the initial euphoria may have prevented proper scrutiny of the situation, which would have revealed whether the changes were genuine and sustainable, or whether the developments would, in fact, create new fault lines in the region, and, at the same time, would have made it possible to address those new fault lines. These factors will be decisive in determining whether these changes develop into a fundamental transformation of the region.

There is no question that the emergence of Eritrea from its self-imposed isolation has created an unprecedented opportunity for the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the region at large. But how are these new changes—both the internal changes in Ethiopia and the subsequent rapprochement—perceived by other countries that are not on board with these developments? What are the objectives of these initiatives? What impact does the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement have on existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region? Will the change in the Sudan be sustainable and what needs to happen to avoid a deepening crisis and avert state collapse? Do these changes help to ensure effectiveness of regional cooperation through the IGAD and do they bring sustainable peace and security in the region?

These are critical questions that must be explored in order for us to understand developments in the region. The present article strives to sift through these questions by investigating the rapprochement, developments in Somalia and the country's specific role in regional integration, developments in the Sudan and the sustainability of these developments, as well as the overall future of IGAD and multilateralism in the Horn.

## 1

## THE ETHIOPIA-ERITREA RAPPROCHEMENT

Most people involved in developments in the Horn agree that the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea is a direct outcome of changes in Ethiopia and the EPRDF's new leadership's immediate implementation of the party's decision regarding the need for normalization. When, in his first address to the Ethiopian parliament following his nomination as Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Prime Minister Abiy suggested that Ethiopia was ready to fully accept and implement the conditions of the Algiers Agreement and called on Eritrea's leaders to reciprocate, the latter responded with a resounding silence.

However, a few days later, probably encouraged by emissaries sent to communicate with Eritrea's leaders, President Isaias declared unexpectedly that he would send officials to check whether the new Ethiopian leadership was serious about its willingness to implement the decisions of the Boundary Commission. In June 2018, true to his promise, President Isaias sent his Presidential Advisor and his Foreign Minister to Addis Ababa. Prime Minister Abiy, on the other hand, deviated from the standard protocol and gave the Eritrean ministerial delegation a red-carpet reception at Bole International Airport. During the delegation's visit, the statements that were heard from both sides were sincere and encouraging, as both underscored their readiness to forget and move forward with the aim of normalizing relations between the two countries and the two peoples. Soon after this, Prime Minister Abiy paid a visit to Asmara and President Isaias reciprocated with a subsequent visit to Addis Ababa and other regions of Ethiopia.

These steps to resolve differences between Ethiopia and Eritrea were hailed as an important outcome of the changes in Ethiopia and the Horn. The fact that the rapprochement was supplemented by agreements signed in Abu Dhabi and Jeddah made them even more significant. Although the normalization made a meaningful contribution to regional peace, questions of institutionalization and the concrete implementation of the provisions of the Algiers Agreement presumably remain. Immediately after the Agreement was signed, claims were made that Eritrea's officials alleged that the border had never been the problem which, inevitably resulted in the rapprochement being further questioned. Eritrea's leaders had decided not to make the border an issue so that the leadership of both countries

would escape scrutiny and the leaders would not get bogged down on the matter and could concentrate on other priorities in Eritrea. This decision gave a space to Ethiopia's leaders not to be bogged down in implementing the specifics of the boundary commission's decisions that Ethiopia had declined to implement, as they are, particularly the area around Badme.

At the same time, the fact that the witnesses of the Algiers Agreements were sidelined<sup>1</sup> during the ceremonial events in the Gulf triggered doubts about the sustainability of the rapprochement. Particularly, when the two leaders signed similar agreements in Abu Dhabi and Jeddah without the presence of the witnesses of the Algiers Agreement, some expressed serious concerns about the direction in which the whole thing appeared to be heading. The agreements were posted on social media and immediately withdrawn.

Some suggested that President Isaias pulled Prime Minister Abiy into the hole he had dug for himself with his close cooperation with the Gulf countries. This fear was further compounded by the way the multilateral forums, IGAD in particular, were handled and treated, further substantiating the doubts raised. Moreover, although the EPRDF as an organization had decided to take the necessary measures to normalize relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the speed with which the new leadership took the measures gave rise to uncertainties concerning the lack of institutionalization of the agreement.

Furthermore, the statement that President Isaias made in Ethiopia regarding what he termed as 'possible spoilers' of the changes in Ethiopia led to further skepticism. Some said that the rapprochement was, in fact, *against someone* rather than *for something* that would advance the entire relationship between the two countries, and apprehension that the process would not make any progress began to be publicly aired. These fears are further substantiated by the absence of the Tigray Region from the whole process. The gaps with regards to current developments between the

<sup>1</sup> In fact, the then Chairperson of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission were initially invited to the ceremony, but were later 'uninvited' from attending the celebration, which raised eyebrows about these developments in the Horn.

Tigray Region and the Ethiopian Federal Government at the center further complicated the implementation of the agreement on the ground. This will continue for quite some time as the TPLF, the vanguard party in Tigray, has declined the new Ethiopian Prosperity Party that the Prime Minister succeeded to establish.

Although the discussion above focused on the political atmosphere at government level between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the changes also impacted the livelihoods of the people living along the common borders, and it was clear how relieved the citizens were when the borders were opened for business. The interactions between the peoples of the two countries immediately following the opening of the borders showed how much the populations of the two countries were yearning for peace. Families that had been separated for years met for the first time and celebrated the peace. Without any bilaterally agreed structures to govern the changes introduced, business boomed and there was an, albeit temporary, sigh of relief. The leaders of both countries made appearances at the common borders and announced that efforts would be geared toward economic integration between the two nations.

This bilateral rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was further expanded when they announced their intention to bring the Somalia Federal Government on board as a partner in trilateral cooperation to initiate a new framework for regional integration. Some regarded the efforts with skepticism as Somalia's Federal Government was hardly in a position to contribute to regional integration given the fact that the leadership had no control over most territories sharing a border with Ethiopia. Others wanted to give the initiative the benefit of the doubt. However, at the end of the day, the reality was clear: This was an exercise that was unlikely to succeed.

Using the window of opportunity of the border opening, tens of thousands of Eritreans left the country in a matter of days. In addition to the influx of Eritreans, the asymmetric economic situation with Eritrea becoming the recipient of all kinds of goods from the Ethiopian side resulted in government monopolies in Eritrea losing control of the market, and security concerns forced the Eritrean government to close the borders.

Currently, the common borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea are closed again. As indicated above, the breakneck speed of the rapprochement appeared to have been intended to emasculate the TPLF, which was accused of resisting the coming to power of Ethiopia's new leadership in Ethiopia, and to address President Isaias's irritation with the TPLF, which he blames for all of Eritrea's woes, and was the reason that Eritrea's leaders subsequently engaged in a new campaign of TPLF defamation in the region. Some actors in Ethiopia also used the same argument in defense of Eritrea's leaders, although in reality it would be fair to say that Eritrea's leaders should accept the blame for all the miscalculations and the choices they have made throughout the process.

One of the contentious issues within the EPRDF, which was used to mobilize the continuous protests, was the ›dominance‹ of the TPLF within the coalition. The legally constituted power-sharing arrangement within the coalition, which allotted 25 percent of the power each to the TPLF, the OPDO (now ODP), the ANDM (now ADP), and the SEPDM representing the people of Southern Ethiopia, was considered unfair due to the unequal sizes of the constituencies that each coalition member represented and which the parliamentary representation reflected. But there was no effort to raise and address the question through existing institutional arrangements. When the changes within the EPRDF occurred, the TPLF made a strategic retreat toward its base and reconciled with its constituency in Tigray. Although this has helped the TPLF to reconsolidate, it also gave the impression that the Front was accepting all the blame directed at it. There is no doubt that the move helped the TPLF to consolidate its power on the ground and to play a role in reminding opponents and partners of the need to sustain Ethiopia's existing constitutional framework. The relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia—particularly with Tigray—must be properly understood. Eritrea's ›game-over‹ rhetoric regarding the TPLF's role in Ethiopian politics may have been easy to announce, but it is not easy to realize. The relationship between Eritrea and Tigray has always been complex, and now it is what experts refer to as the ›tyranny of numbers‹ that might explain the relations in the border areas. However, what happened in the areas around the common borders during the recent opening relieved the administration in Tigray of a significant amount of stress.

The Eritrean economy is struggling with no sign of progress. Ethiopia's economic growth was cascaded to help develop Ethiopia's federal states, and Tigray's economic capacity has thus improved tremendously over the years. Eritrea is losing its youth through migration, while Tigray has the potential to mobilize young people. The population of Tigray is more than seven million, while Eritrea's is much smaller and continues to decrease due to emigration. Tigray therefore has the necessary capacity to play a modest role in the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and it also contributes to the asymmetries of the relations between the two countries. What is disheartening is that the opportunity created through the rapprochement appears to have been squandered due to a lack of institutional framework and commitment to serious implementation of the agreed arrangements. No doubt, issues caused by the idiosyncratic personalities of the key political players in the process might also have rendered the whole effort far more complicated than would normally be the case.

## 2

## DEVELOPMENTS IN SOMALIA AND ITS ROLE IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The changes in Ethiopia and the rapprochement with Eritrea created an opportunity for Somalia's Federal Government to join a tripartite effort toward economic integration. It is very well known that Somalia has yet to establish a government that fully exercises a monopoly of coercion across the entire country, and there are a number of Federal Member States (FMS) that have resisted being dictated to by the current officials of the Somalia Federal Government (SFG). This tension emerged following the election of the current officials of the SFG in 2017. The FMS had created alliances to demonstrate their strength and to enable them to negotiate a better deal with the SFG, but the SFG preferred to weaken the states individually through coercion or inducements. Rather than engaging them as a united front, the SFG opted to deal with them one by one in an attempt to fragment their alliances. To some extent, the SFG has succeeded. It has changed the leadership in some of the FMS and ultimately ensured that the alliances the FMS created are no longer functional. This is similar to how the Islamic Courts Union dealt with their opponents enabling them to emerge as the sole power in Southern Somalia from 2005 until early 2007.

Currently, the SFG is facing a dual challenge: on the one hand, addressing the threats that al-Shabaab poses and, on the other, asserting itself as the *de facto* and *de jure* government of the entire country and the federal member states. It appears that the SFG has yet to show progress on either of these fronts. The assault it has waged on the FMS has created fault lines that al-Shabaab is manipulating. The situation in the Southwest, Galmudug, and Hirshabelle States and the strength demonstrated by al-Shabaab reflect these fault lines. Puntland and Jubaland have survived the onslaught of the SFG and are reasserting themselves in their respective areas of control, despite the continued attempts of the SFG to stifle them, Jubaland in particular. However, these confrontations will help neither the SFG nor the contesting FMS, as they could have used the resources spent on self-defense and attacks to unite their strengths against a common enemy. Obviously, if the SFG had created a framework of cooperation with all the Federal Member States, the war on al-Shabaab and the creation of governance institutions that would have allowed the government to gradually exercise a legal monopoly of coercion would have been easy to achieve. If the international community is unable to push this, it will not help Somalia consolidate its achievements.

There is no doubt that, with the support of the international community, the Somalia Federal Government is trying to exercise its *de jure* legitimacy. But these efforts have yet to yield the necessary result since the leadership does not seem to have taken a judicious approach with the Federal Member States, for instance by engaging them in dialogue to create a common platform for joint governance and consolidating peace elsewhere. Ultimately, the SFG was able to claim the progress in these administrations as its own success. Rather than implementing a process of institution-building on the basis of existing structures, nurturing federalism, and coordinating with the regional administrations, the new leadership of the SFG, which came to power in 2017, opted to undermine the Federal Member States and impose itself on them. Because the leadership failed to consider the FMS as partners in governance and in addressing the threats of al-Shabaab and ISIS, the confrontation with the FMS created more opportunities for the extremist groups to manipulate the fault lines between the SFG and the FMS. And, while some of the regional administrations have succumbed to the interferences of the SFG leadership, others have resisted and survived. The government's attempts to influence the elections in Puntland and Jubaland faltered, for instance, while the SFG succeeded, with the support of local actors and others from the region, in undoing some of the achievements of the FMS in Galmudug, the Southwest and Hirshabelle States.

The SFG also successfully imposed its own president on the Southwest State, after jailing Mukhtar Robow, and dismantled the Galmudug administration. The recent agreement with Ahlu Suna Wal-Jamaa is unlikely to succeed although millions of dollars have changed hands. Obviously, the SFG will sway the upcoming election in Galmudug in its favor. This may not ensure a sustainable peace, however, and may even trigger further crisis instead. Since the area was the first to challenge the al-Shabaab leadership and broke the myth regarding the group, and is also adjacent to Ethiopia's buffer zone, the challenge it poses cannot be ignored and needs to be addressed.

Given these realities, the possible role of the SFG in the regional integration scheme needs closer scrutiny. As indicated earlier, the changes in Ethiopia and the rapprochement with Eritrea that followed created an opportunity to bring the Somalia Federal Government on board as a partner for



regional integration. However, this readiness to cooperate might have complicated the situation in Somalia as the SFG exploited the effort to undermine the FMS. Two consecutive meetings, held in Asmara and Gondar, between the leaders of the three countries emboldened Farmajo and his colleagues to take aggressive and forceful measures to assert themselves on the ground by destabilizing the FMS, which were in the process of transition by holding elections or establishing better administrative apparatuses.

It appears that the SFG has been advised to reverse federalism in Somalia. But this is not an easy feat. In actual fact, rather than contributing to regional integration by mobilizing the regional administrations to consolidate peace and security, the SFG is using the tripartite framework as a source of power and external legitimacy to intimidate the FMS. Eritrea's leaders consider the introduction of federal structures to be a balkanization of Somalia and do not support such arrangements. The Eritrean leaders have encouraged the SFG leadership to dismantle the federal structures in Somalia. Since the leaders of Eritrea have a very hostile attitude towards federalism in general, including in their own country, it would not be too surprising if these suspicions turned out to be well-founded, based on Somalia's experience and the SFG's actions.

Even if we contest the application of federalism in Somalia, any examination of the challenges should still always consider the facts on the ground and the way most administrations are created. Hence, more emphasis should be placed on how to support Somalis in creating frameworks of dialogue for institutional development around which consensus can ultimately be built. Somali leaders should refrain from using external leverage to force changes that are not sustainable, thus leading to further fragmentation in the country. Moreover, there are contentions regarding the benefits of, for example, clan-based power sharing in Somalia. The 4.5 formula—a framework that was put in place at a reconciliation conference in Djibouti in 2000 and one that ensures equal representation for all the major clans and fair representation for the remaining 'minority' clans—might not be the best arrangement and may reveal a number of fault lines.

However, as a framework of power sharing, it has partially solved Somalia's problems. It has also expanded the relatively peaceful areas and developed them as local administrative mechanisms. Moreover, these local level structures have facilitated indigenous governance institutions that have made a significant contribution to uprooting extremist groups.

It should be emphasized that these processes have created winners and losers and that those who have benefited have the capacity to presumably sustain the processes. But when the SFG introduces huge financial inducements, fault lines widen and affect the equilibrium on the ground. Although the SFG claims to provide a unitary governance structure in Somalia, most Somalis may feel that federalism helps to address some of the fault lines as well as the decentralization of power that occurs when a single community or clan over-

uses nationalism and is the source of resentment among Somali communities. The dispute caused by these divergent views will continue to consume resources and energy in the country.

Given the local contestation in Somalia between the SFG and the FMS, the positions taken by opposing communities in support of one side or the other further deepen existing fault lines. The export of the Gulf crisis to Somalia in support of contesting local actors will aggravate the situation, both financially and logistically, making the SFG's efforts to assert itself in Somalia an uphill struggle.

The recent election in Jubaland and the failure of the SFG to influence the process to its liking has further complicated the situation. The embargo that the SFG imposed on Kismayo will impact the everyday lives of the population there. The positions the regional actors and governments took regarding the election in Jubaland added fuel to the fire. These differences further complicate the upcoming election in Mogadishu for the new leadership, since the recent conflict between the SFG and Jubaland leadership represents the beginnings of the 2020/21 election contest.

Puntland and Jubaland have boycotted the ongoing Somalia Partnership Forum, something that will ultimately affect the role of the partners and which might be sanctioned by the SFG. These complex factors will prevent the SFG leadership from playing its part in fostering regional integration and overall peace and security in the Horn. The capacity of the SFG to address the challenges of al-Shabaab, without having a clear roadmap to bring Somalia's actors together, is feeble. The main strategy, therefore, should be to ensure that the SFG and the FMS resolve their differences amicably and work together toward addressing the bigger challenges Somalia is facing.

## 3

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SUDAN AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROCESS

What has happened in the Sudan has given hope when it comes to changes in the Horn of Africa. The removal from power of President al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan for more than 30 years, is a critical development that has triggered a certain amount of optimism. The protests in the Sudan that began in 2018 did not force al-Bashir to relinquish power. But they did enable his own officers to organize a coup to oust him. The Transitional Military Council's seizure of power complicated the politics, as the TMC was not prepared to hand over power to a civilian government and accommodate the protesters. The TMC even tried to coerce the protesters and disband them altogether. It was confident that it would be able to create a new framework that would allow Sudan to hold elections in the near future. The protesters did not back down, however. They survived the crackdown and showed their resilience although the measures taken by the TMC resulted in the deaths of a number of protesters in the process.

However, the crackdown in June 2019 provoked sustained pressure from the Western governments exerted through their partners' proxies among the TMC leadership. The Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) used the opportunity to further mobilize millions of Sudanese in huge demonstrations and showed the TMC that it cannot govern the country alone. Ethiopia and the African Union Commission jointly undertook an initiative and succeeded in getting the TMC and the FFC to sign an agreement that allowed a power-sharing government to be established. A longtime UN official, Abdalla Hamdok, who declined al-Bashir's Finance Minister appointment, has now been appointed the new Prime Minister. Following his appointment, Prime Minister Hamdok established his cabinet and also recently outlined his vision to the high-level meeting in New York in September 2019.

Sudan's challenges are much more complicated. Even if a civilian government is established, this does not automatically mean that Sudan's woes are over. The major actors within the TMC do not form a cohesive group and there are other actors threatening to undermine the process. The former intelligence network led by Salah Gosh, the Islamic groups, and the NCP are still forces that are not fully accommodated in the process and remain a potent threat to the transition. Moreover, the new leadership needs the full support of the international community. Sudan has been subject to sanc-

tions from the United States for various reasons, the most prominent of which is that the Sudan has sponsored terrorist groups. If the international community wants the Sudan to achieve sustainable economic and political transformation, the US needs to lift the sanctions imposed on the Sudan. This is, of course, not an easy matter as it would require a decision from the US Congress.

There is a tendency on the part of external actors to look at the internal resource distribution and concentration before embarking on supporting the effort. Bashir's government had concentrated its resources in the security apparatus and of course this needs to be changed. However, serious institutional scrutiny and knowledge are required to understand the dynamics at play here. It is not going to be an easy fight. If the precondition for transformation is that the new leadership make the necessary changes, this will create opportunities for spoilers to manipulate the situation and hence should be avoided. What happened in Sudan is a godsend for regional transformation in the Horn. But it is also a warning to the aging leadership in the area that the millennials are losing patience with their leaders.

## 4

## THE FUTURE OF IGAD AND MULTILATERALISM IN THE HORN

The «no war, no peace» situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea weakened multilateralism in the region for two decades. Before the changes in Ethiopia, the country's diplomats had persuaded their counterparts in IGAD member states to take a common position regarding Eritrea and its role in the region. There is no question that Eritrea also willingly allowed itself to be sidelined by the IGAD forum, as the country withdrew from the organization based on Ethiopia's involvement to Somalia in 2006. The recent rapprochement had created huge expectations that Eritrea would rejoin and contribute to revitalizing the organization. However, Eritrea has, so far, decided to remain outside of IGAD, and it would now be difficult to expect Eritrea to return to the organization. It is important to note that membership of IGAD is not attractive to Eritrea and there are number of reasons for this.

Eritrea's leaders appear to be angry with IGAD and are pushing a different regional integration agenda through a tripartite arrangement between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. This is driven by the fact that Eritrea's leaders remain uncomfortable with the leaders of the other countries in the region, which Eritrea blames for the sanction regime imposed on it since 2009. This policy is evident from Eritrea's attempts to push the newcomers into a new framework, knowing that this will create fault lines and suspicions within the IGAD region. Another possible reason for Eritrea's dislike of IGAD is that the country, following a loss of face after the unsuccessful war with Ethiopia, would have less leverage within the organization compared to Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Eritrea's leaders are not prepared to play a peripheral role in the IGAD region.

When the rapprochement was achieved, Eritrea's leaders thought that this would take the region back to 1991 with Eritrea playing a central part in shaping developments in Ethiopia through the intermediary role in bringing together the new leadership and the opposition that Eritrea had played for quite some time, and that it would through Ethiopia be able to shape developments across the entire region. Eritrea still plays its own distinct role in the region, particularly in Somalia and the Sudan, and by allying itself with Egypt when it comes to its engagement with the TMC.

Having a strong Somalia is intended to neutralize Djibouti in an effort to counterbalance the giant that is Ethiopia.

Leveraging the Gulf and Egypt also works towards the same objective. Having a unified and strong Somalia might, according to Eritrea's leaders and similarly also the government in Cairo, help to tame Ethiopia—or even to weaken it. Until then, the bilateral arrangement remains a camouflage, which avoids institutionalize the relationship through agreements whereby accountability and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would be put in place to ensure checks and balances.

This has created additional rifts within the region, with Djibouti and Kenya suspicious of the new developments. Kenya is not sure what the leadership in Asmara is up to. Moreover, Kenya is also pursuing its own interests, irrespective of the implications that competition between troop contributing countries in AMISOM have for Somalia's peace and stability. The territorial dispute between Kenya and Somalia is further exacerbating the differences.

The irrelevance of IGAD in the eyes of Eritrea's leaders was revealed, counter-intuitively, when the UN lifted the sanctions imposed on Eritrea without the involvement of IGAD and the African Union, both of which—according to Eritrea—initiated the sanctions on Eritrea in 2009.

Eritrea remains furious with IGAD and the African Union and continues to maintain a cynical position regarding IGAD. This cynicism appears to be affecting the key actors within IGAD. Eritrea expects both IGAD and the AU to apologize for imposing the sanctions on it, but no apology appears to be forthcoming—so does Eritrea's decision to stay away from these institutions.

## 5

## CONCLUSION

The positive developments in the Horn of Africa are opportunities that should be properly utilized to bring about sustainable transformation in the region. At the same time, there is a need to address the prevailing fault lines. It should be emphasized that the changes in the Sudan and in Ethiopia, the rapprochement with Eritrea, and the aim of trilateral economic integration are not organically linked and are not framed through the existing multilateral cooperation framework of IGAD. This means that IGAD's members have not utilized these opportunities and the impacts cannot be multiplied throughout the IGAD region.

In fact, many seem to feel that the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea has created suspicion. Before being ousted by the coup, al-Bashir's government had been questioning whether the rapprochement would add value to regional cooperation within IGAD. Moreover, even if Djibouti has belatedly welcomed the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, there are still misgivings about how this might impact Djibouti's interests.

Since Djibouti did not agree to Ethiopia's request to lift the sanctions on Eritrea following the rapprochement, Eritrea remains unhappy with Djibouti. Kenya is no different in this regard. It was unclear to Kenya whether developments in Ethiopia represented a small problem that the Ethiopian leadership would be able to handle, or whether the problem would become unmanageable, thus creating havoc in the region. For the first time since Kenya's independence, Ethiopia and Kenya are pursuing contradictory policies on Somalia. Ethiopia supports the SFG, while Kenya is on a collision course with the SFG, and this is impacting relations between the SFG and the FMS. Although diplomats from both countries have publicly denied the existence of a growing rift between Ethiopia and Kenya, the realities are becoming clear. The stark differences over the Jubaland election have now also reached the attention of the public.

Developments in the region are perceived to have secured the Gulf's role in the Horn, rather than the role of the continent's regional organizations. However, the increasingly apparent role of the Gulf is also at times destabilizing. Support from the Gulf countries periodically undermines the effort towards democratization and encourages authoritarianism. Moreover, it affects the relationship between the Horn and other regions of Africa. African governments

are anxious about the not entirely unlikely prospect of a number of Gulf countries having more say in the region and exporting their transactional approaches. This is not helpful, and countries such as Ethiopia, which have contributed tremendously to Africa's progress since the colonial struggle, cannot afford to lose Africa due to misconceptions about the Horn. Such attitudes will also undermine the peace and stability of the region. The region, therefore, needs to organize itself in a manner that will help achieve cohesion and to revamp the role of IGAD so that it will be in a position to link the changes organically and move member states together toward better lives for the people in the region. Serious regional integration must go beyond rhetorical statements and should be based on objective interconnectedness. Only with this approach can the region's peace, stability, and prosperity be guaranteed. There are, in fact, significant possibilities for the IGAD countries and the Gulf to establish conditions for a very useful, mutually beneficial form of cooperation focusing on development, trade, and investment. Their economies are indeed complementary, and an objective assessment of the relations between the two sides would provide evidence of this. However, for all this to be recognized there is a need for wisdom and resolve from both sides—wisdom from the Gulf to acknowledge the win-win possibilities; and from the IGAD countries to realize that there is a lot uniting rather than dividing them, and accordingly to develop a greater commitment to their unity and to multilateralism.

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## WIND OF CHANGE

### Assessing Positive Developments in the Horn and Their Impact on Regional Peace and Security



An unprecedented wind of change is blowing in the Horn of Africa and this has created hopes, expectations and anxieties simultaneously. The transformations include the changes in Ethiopia and the ensuing rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the recent changes in the Sudan, a new integration framework in the Horn between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia and the recent agreement between the Transitional Military Council and the protesters (represented by the Forces for Freedom and Change—FFC) in the Sudan to establish a united civilian government in the country. These changes are creating hopes as well as anxieties in the Horn of Africa. Whilst the changes happening in the Horn are positive and indeed are welcome developments, at the same time there are worrying trends consequential to the Horn and beyond given the developing new fault lines in the region. The paper explores the fault lines and argues that they need to be well understood and given serious attention if the positive trajectory is to be sustained.



In fact, the role of the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea seems to have created suspicions – notably between Ethiopia and Kenya over the policy towards Somalia. The developments also seem to have secured the role of the Gulf in the Horn. The support by the Gulf at times undermines the effort towards democratization, encourages authoritarianism and affects the relationship between the Horn and other regions of Africa. Countries like Ethiopia that have contributed tremendously to Africa's progress since the colonial struggle cannot afford to lose Africa due to misperceptions about the Horn.



The changes in the Sudan, in Ethiopia and the rapprochement with Eritrea and the trilateral economic integration ambition are not organically linked and are not framed through the existing multilateral cooperation framework of IGAD. This means that the opportunities do not have the contributions of all of IGAD's members and the impacts cannot be multiplied throughout the IGAD region. Strengthening and reviving serious regional integration through IGAD is a pivotal part of bringing peace and stability to the region and ensure good relations with other parts of the continent.

Further information on the topic can be found here:  
[www.fes.de/en/africa-department](http://www.fes.de/en/africa-department)