

governments, there have not been policy initiatives directed to provide support for agriculture.

● *Infrastructure.* The nation's infrastructure for transportation, drinking water, power, agriculture, and industry is undeveloped. Since Sudan is a large country, poor transportation is especially inhibiting. When the British left in 1956, there was not one paved road in the country. There was only the railroad, and it was designed for special military and export purposes, and *not* to serve the rural areas.

After independence, when the Sudanese proposed to the World Bank that infrastructure development be undertaken, this was refused. When it was proposed to other foreign investors and/or donors of aid, that there should be links to infrastructure development, these linkages were refused. Instead, so-called development aid was "donor-driven," and directed to quick-return cash crops for export.

The legacy of these factors, plus poor agriculture extension services and other problems, have led to the current situation of recurring food crises. In view of this, the stated policy of the Sudanese government is to reach and maintain food self-reliance. According to Abdalla, "the syndrome of dependency must be stopped."

### Stop the 'syndrome of dependency': oil

The Sudanese "National Economic Salvation Program" stated as a chief goal: "Reallocation of the meager resources left to achieve the objective of self-dependency, particularly in view of the mounting economic pressure put on the revolution by many external powers through reduced external assistance and suspension of aid flows." Besides agriculture, oil is the priority economic development issue, and the oil production potential of Sudan is considered by experts to be in league with parts of the Arabian Gulf fields.

Significant oil deposits were mapped by the Chevron division of Socal in the 1970s and '80s, located in central and southern Sudan. Proven reserves of 200 million barrels were announced. Chevron and the government had a \$1.2 billion development program, with one project at Bentiu, in the upper Nile region, 500 miles south of Khartoum. A 1,425 kilometer pipeline to the coast was planned.

In February 1984, Chevron suspended its preparations for oil extraction in southern Sudan, after a guerrilla attack on a drilling barge killed three expatriate workers and wounded seven more. Chevron refused to carry on with the project, citing the dangers of civil war, but authorities in the oil trade reported that Chevron accepted a payoff arrangement from Saudi Arabia, to suspend development of Sudanese oil. Chevron's parent company, Socal, sold 25% of the Sudanese venture to Royal Dutch Shell, including the White Nile assets.

Next year, the Chevron rights expire for extracting Sudanese oil. The Sudanese government has now taken direct responsibility for developing its own oil, with the current limitation being refinery capacity.

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## Interview: Madame Fatuma Isak Bihi

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# Situation in Somalia is 'catastrophic'

by Christine Bierre

We are witnessing today the ethnic fragmentation of Somalia, thanks in substantial part to the policies of the foreign powers who are sponsoring the various warring groups. Some 2 million refugees have fled Somalia toward the borders of neighboring countries—Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya—since January, when the armies of the Congress of Somali Unity took over the capital, Mogadiscio, under the direction of CSU chief General Aydid, and drove out the current head of state, Siad Barre.

In the south and center of the country, CSU troops have perpetrated terrible massacres; in the village of Brava, hundreds of medics, teachers, and intellectuals were murdered. In the north, the Somali National Movement (SNM) has announced its secession, and the creation of the Republic of Somaliland. Throughout the country, battles rage between forces loyal to Siad Barre and the forces of the other movements. The dislocation now under way follows years of poverty under Siad Barre, who remains in the country.

In area, Somalia ranks in size with France and the Low Countries combined, where over 80 million people live, compared with the 8.5 million in Somalia. During Siad Barre's tenure in office, Somalia placed among the six poorest nations in the world, with its revenue coming almost entirely from the export of bananas and livestock.

The United States supported Siad Barre until 1988, then did an about-face. Since the end of the cold war, Somalia, once considered an important strategic place, evidently holds no more interest for the United States. Following an often-used *modus operandi*, it was a report by Amnesty International denouncing "massive violations of human rights" in Somalia, which preceded Washington's reversal. All forms of aid have been cut, propelling the country into a situation in which famine, civil war, and epidemics threaten its very existence. An international conference to establish peace is mooted for Cairo, under the auspices of Italy and Egypt, but no date has been set.

Madame Fatuma Isak Bihi, former ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Somalia to the European headquarters of the United Nations and international organizations in

Geneva, discussed the situation in June in an interview with this author.

**EIR:** Your excellency, what is the situation in Somalia, since President Siad Barre was forced to leave the capital?

**Bihi:** The situation is catastrophic. There is no longer any central authority; the capital has been completely destroyed, and 99% of its inhabitants have fled; there is no electricity, no water, no government—nothing. The capital has been occupied by the Hawiye tribe, who are eliminating all those who are not part of their community. Close to 2 million Somalians have fled the country, although some groups are returning. They are either going into neighboring countries—like Ethiopia, which has its own problems, or Kenya or Djibouti—or to the frontier areas between Somalia and these countries. The Hawiye are trying to hold onto power, and have formed a “provisional” government which has not been recognized by any other opposition movement. Seven of these movements are in the midst of fighting in the rest of the country, notably in the South—between tribal groups, and against units of the armed forces. President Siad Barre remains in the country, and the armed forces remain loyal to him.

Unfortunately, we do not believe that there exists, in the short term, a solution to the Somalian problem. However, we have been told that some Somalians abroad are in contact with different tribal groups, to see whether it were possible to achieve a reconciliation among Somalians. In the North, the Isaak have proclaimed their independence. This region had originally been colonized by Great Britain, which called it Somaliland, a name now adopted again by the Isaak. The Somalian situation is so desperate that the United Nations Security Council must also look into it. In addition to all this, the country is being hit by drought, and thousands of people are dying of starvation.

**EIR:** Are these tribal groups being manipulated by foreign powers?

**Bihi:** Absolutely. The West has encouraged these groups to revolt against the central government. Italy has played an important role in encouraging the Hawiye in the South. From the beginning, Great Britain has encouraged the Isaaks of the North. Now it is obvious that the situation—even for these countries—has gotten out of control. They are searching for some kind of transition, which they want not to be so bloody, so destructive.

**EIR:** This situation has placed you personally in difficulties, given that you are the accredited ambassador of Somalia to the United Nations in Geneva.

**Bihi:** Yes. Right after the seizure of Mogadiscio by the tribal groups, I was one of the ambassadors who was being hunted down, in order to be eliminated. Fortunately, at the time I was in Europe, because, if I had been in Mogadiscio, I would

have been physically eliminated. I was in the cross hairs, but the U.N. has rejected the demands of the Congress of Somali Unity—the new government—to replace me. Unfortunately, it seems as if the Swiss government has cooperated with the CSU to expel me from this country, even though I am still recognized as the sole representative of Somalia at the United Nations in Geneva.

**EIR:** What happened, exactly?

**Bihi:** The CSU put pressure on the Swiss government by sending their so-called prime minister, M. Omar Arthe, accompanied, apparently, by four other ministers. They wanted to get rid of me, to seize the funds of the Somalian state deposited in Swiss banks, and to obtain international recognition. Knowing that they would not get that, they then demanded what they called “humanitarian aid,” that is to say, the opportunity to massacre more Somalians. It seems that the Swiss government cooperated with them in flagrant violation of my rights as a diplomat—a flagrant violation toward anyone who had represented, with dignity and honor, his country at the United Nations, and who had not committed any illegal act against Switzerland and her people.

**EIR:** Apparently, some Swiss newspapers called into question your character and motives?

**Bihi:** Toward the end of last year, the Somalian defense minister bought a shipload of rice in Switzerland, and the cargo reached the territorial waters of Somalia just as the battle was raging in the capital. The defense minister told me to take charge of the cargo. Not being able to convince the owner of the ship to unload it in one of our ports, he told me to sell the cargo in whatever country the ship could reach, and that is what I told the ship’s owner. The Swiss were informed by a young man who worked with me as an adviser, and who wanted to replace me. Manipulated by the CSU, he launched this campaign with the help of the Swiss authorities, declaring that I had sold the merchandise and pocketed the money. That is absolutely false; it is a lie, a calumny; I am an honest person, having worked for my country for more than 30 years; and in these darkest hours which have befallen my people, I would never have done such a thing. I utterly reject these allegations. They are only a pretext for the Swiss to expel me.

**EIR:** And you say that this entire affair is now before a court in England?

**Bihi:** Exactly. The owner of the ship and the insurance company have filed suits against each other, concerning the damages that were caused, and we have ourselves appeared before this court to reclaim our rice. In fact, the cargo was sold in Abidjan, the money is frozen in London, and will be held there until, eventually, a legitimate Somalian government can take possession of it. This can be verified by the documents which I am making available to you.