



The Horn of Africa, from where to where?

For many observers of the region, North East Africa is primarily known as a war ravaged area characterized by intractable conflicts, armed confrontations, proxy wars, human misery and failed states.

Recently, Islamist radicalization and the subsequent “global war on terrorism” seem to be adding another galvanizing ingredient. For some, this has its historical roots back in the “scramble for Africa”, the Berlin conference of 1884 and the subsequent division of the continent into colonies. It is also true that in the era of cold war this part of Africa was the battle field for superpower rivalry and confrontation. Again, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, different interests from far away states have played an important role in triggering the conflicts in this region.

For generations and decades the people of the region has been deprived of peace and prosperity. They are now tired of continuous devastating wars, displacements, human catastrophes and life in unsafe refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

The question is if there are any prospects of a brighter situation in the foreseeable future that could enable the region to regain a very sought-after peace. This is the question ordinary people are asking themselves, and they expect an answer from the well-educated Diaspora, whose recommendations to the ruling elites on how to deal with conflicts that are now being solved only through violence and bloody confrontation would give them a ray of hope.

The yearly Afar Friends Conference in Uppsala on North East Africa – our ninth consecutive conference – will provide a platform for discussions between intellectuals with roots in the countries forming this geo-political zone with the aim of tabling various views that can lead to a peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups in general and national states in particular. This year’s conference will not be any different. Scholars from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan will air and share with the public their well-thought out recommendations for the Horn states in order for them to break this vicious circle of ever-recurrent confrontation. This year’s conference will be taking place when the unsolved border issue between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the border conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti, and the Darfur crises are still vivid concerns for many observers, while the newly formed government in stateless Somalia is offering a new glimmer of hope for a new start.



You are all invited and most welcome to participate in the conference and contribute to discussions!

The conference is partly financed by Forum Syd and Uppsala Municipality

Place and time: Kungsängsgatan 12, 1 tr, Drakensalen, Mars 7 starting from 12 pm with lunch

Organizers: Afar Friends in Sweden in collaboration with ABF i Uppsala län and with participation of different Horn of African civil society organisations in Uppsala, Sweden

Programme:

- 11.50 - 12.50** **Gathering including lunch**
- 12.50 - 13.00** **Opening of the conference**
Mrs Agneta Simonsson, 1st vice Chairman of Uppsala Municipal council
- 13.00 - 13.15** **Keynote Speech**
Hamad Issa, Chairman of the Afar Friends in Sweden
- 13.15 - 13.45** **Is Building Peace In Harmonious Diversity Possible in Eritrea?**
Dr Tedros Amanuel, Chairman of the Eritrean association for Democracy and Human rights
- 13.45 - 14.15** **Djibouti, the abuse of basic human rights can never be the internal affair of a single state in the era of globalisation.**
Mme Simone Bernier, founding member and Secretary General of ORDHD, Observatoire pour le Respect des Droits Humains à Djibouti, Paris, France



14.15 - 14.45

Moving beyond the global war on terrorism in the Horn: Prospects for political development in Somalia, Abdulkadir Osman Farah, PhD
fellow Department of History, International and Social Studies Aalborg University, Denmark

15.15 - 15.45

Break

15.45 - 16.15

Sustainable Development and the Role of Interfaith, interethnic and intercultural civic society in Diverse regional states. Alternative Paradigms of Indigenous Negotiated Management of Peace and Resource Sharing in the Horn of Africa – The Cases of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia

Dr. Ahmed A. Moen, Professor, International Health and Comparative Studies in interfaith and Conflict Management, Howard University, Washington, D.C., and one of the founding members of the Ad-hoc Committee for Peace and Development in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa and Founding Members of The Ethiopian Elders' Council in Ethiopia since 1990. – The Case of Ethiopia

16.15 - 16.45

Conflict, peace building and regional cooperation; experience from Sudan

Dr Babekir El Ubeid, PhD in Political Science and Chairman of the Sudanese association in Uppsala

16.45 - 18.00

Panel discussions

Moderator: Professor Lars Rudebeck, Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development, Uppsala University

Afar Friends in Sweden is a licensed Swedish international non governmental organization. Its mission is to inform the international community about the plight of the Afar people in the Horn of Africa. We also provide expertise, knowledge, and support for the development of programs dedicated to helping the Afar people fight the war against illiteracy, bad traditions (FGM), drugs (khat), water shortage, drought, diseases etc. Please do not hesitate to visit our website for more information on www.afarfriends.org.