

Africa in Review 2022: Mounting Challenges Require Long Term Solutions

Part III, Peace accord in Ethiopia, COP27 at Sharm-el-Sheikh and the second continental public health summit portends much for the coming years

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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A report in the Voice of America, the public international news service for the United States State Department, said that there were troop movements by the State of Eritrea from areas in the Tigray province of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia where a war has been waged over the last two years.

However, claims of the presence of Eritrean soldiers engaged in the territorial defense of Ethiopia has never been the source of the complete breakdown of relations between the current government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which between 1991 and 2018 ruled the Horn of Africa state through the framework of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

The EPRDF regime collapsed under the political weight of a national rebellion which brought Abiy to power in April 2018. His administration has faced numerous challenges particularly in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, regional differences with Egypt and Sudan as well as an overall downturn stemming from the impact of the world capitalist crisis spawned by the Russian-Ukraine war in Eastern Europe.

During November, the peace talks which resulted in a landmark accord to demilitarize the Tigray province and reestablish central Ethiopian authority over the northern areas of the country of 122 million people, was brokered by envoys empowered by the African Union (AU) based in Addis Ababa. The first round of the discussions was facilitated by the host Republic of South Africa in Pretoria, under Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr. Naledi Pandor, while elder statesmen and former President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Kenya recently outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta utilized their diplomatic standing and political experience to secure the agreement.

Later in Nairobi, other aspects were discussed related to the process of military disengagement and the reintegration of Tigray back into the national infrastructure of Ethiopia. In the concluding weeks of 2022 there was the reconnection of phone services and the deployment of police from the federal government into Mekelle, the provincial capital. Flights have resumed between Addis Ababa and Mekelle.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden would have much preferred the overthrow of the Abiy government in Addis Ababa and the replacement of the ruling Prosperity Party with a TPLF-led regime. Even prior to the removal of former President Donald Trump in 2020, the war had erupted on November 4, 2020, around the time of the contentious elections which aggravated a deeply divided political culture in the world's leading capitalist and imperialist state.

Nonetheless, when the Biden administration came to power in January 2021 the same antagonistic posture towards Ethiopia continued. It would take a mass campaign led by Ethiopian and Eritrean Americans to defeat a sanctions bill aimed at crippling the economy of two Horn of Africa states. This bill which remains stalled in Congress was drafted over and above the suspension of Ethiopia from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade program which was initiated under the administration of former President Bill Clinton in 2000.

The peace accord if fully implemented will not completely resolve the question of national unity in Ethiopia. Large scale displacement and fighting continues in the southern Oromo province where clashes are taking place on a daily basis. People within the Afar and Amhara provinces and communities were drawn into the war against the TPLF. Over the border with Sudan, there are refugees in need of resettlement inside Ethiopia.

Despite these ongoing monumental problems, the peace accord in Ethiopia and the role of the AU has been hailed as a major achievement in line with the need to find African solutions to African problems. Such an approach could serve as a model for efforts to resolve the national and regional crises of relations which are in large measure prompted by the legacy of imperialism.

COP27: Egypt Provided Platform for African Proposals to Address Climate Change

Another series of extreme weather events in Africa have reemphasized the worsening threat of environmental degradation. In the KwaZulu-Natal region of the Republic of South Africa floods struck the urban areas around the strategic port city of Durban leaving thousands homeless.

Erratic rains and prolonged periods of drought are causing havoc within the agricultural production sector along with manufacturing impacted by power cuts and the dislocation of work forces. Somalia in the Horn of Africa has been on the verge of famine since the early months of 2022. Disruptions in the agricultural supply chains due to the war in Ukraine and the unprecedented draconian sanctions against the Russian Federation by numerous imperialist states has hampered the importation of grain along with inputs such as fertilizers on the African continent.

Therefore, when the United Nations Climate Conference (COP27) was scheduled to be held at the Egyptian resort area of Sharm-el-Sheikh, this historic site and event fostered the belief among many that the African condition would receive a proper hearing. There were several preliminary meetings which led up to the actual summit.

Nevertheless, the large-scale presence of U.S. diplomatic and corporate representatives placed a damper on the overall tenor of the deliberations. Even though there was momentum for some form of a breakthrough in regard to acknowledging the obligations of the western industrialized capitalist states for the proliferation of greenhouse gas emissions, the resistance from the imperialists was formidable.

Towards the end of the conference there was the announcement of some type of fund which would address the impact of multinational corporations and their governments for environmental damage. However, the details remain murky while many can remember previous promises of compensation within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework a decade or more ago. The character of international finance capital operates within its own self-serving logic. A sharp increase in profits for the oil and natural gas firms based in the industrialized countries coupled with the economic and military conflagration involving the Russian Federation has intensified the scramble for energy resources on a global scale.

Therefore, the focus on halting further environmental degradation caused by climate change represents a major aspect of the struggle between the imperialist states and the majority populations and nations within the Global South. The future of the world will be determined by the outcome of the inevitable clash of the wealthy capitalist and imperialists against the workers, farmers and youth of the world.

African CDC Holds Second Public Health Summit in Kigali

Emerging from the almost exclusive pandemic virtual mode of conferences since early 2020, the Conference on Public Health in Africa held its second gathering in Rwanda in early December 2022. The summit highlighted the work of the African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an affiliate of the AU located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (See [this](#))

This meeting mobilized African youth, scientists and medical workers to discuss the public

health status within the AU member-states. At present the coronavirus pandemic appears to be lessening although new concerns have arisen in Uganda with the outbreak of the Sudan variant of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Mpox, which had largely been an infectious disease seen in several West and Central African states, during 2022 made its appearance as a public health concern for people in the Western countries.

The African CDC holds internationally broadcast weekly briefings where data is presented on the number of recorded cases of Covid, Ebola, Mpox, cholera and a host of other diseases which threaten the continent and the international community. Statistics on the number of coronavirus vaccines administered by AU member-states are reported along with the efforts to enhance collaboration among scientists and healthcare professionals.

These briefings are open to members of various media agencies across Africa and throughout the world. Questions are often asked about the effectiveness of data collection and the progress being made in regard to the development of vaccines and other medicinal manufacturing on the continent.

The construction of continent-wide public health infrastructure institutions is vital in the realization of Pan-Africanism in the 21st century. As the population of Africa extends beyond its present 1.4 billion, the need for larger numbers of trained healthcare workers and researchers will grow exponentially. Retaining the workers within the AU member-states is of equal importance in light of the so-called “brain drain” from the continent to the imperialist states which can in many instances offer higher salaries and better employment conditions.

This does not mean that the migration of African technical workers even in the much-demanded healthcare sectors remain absent of difficulties. Inside the U.S. and the United Kingdom, there is much discontent among doctors and nurses who were severely impacted by health problems and labor distress during the height of the pandemic. Strikes in both the U.S. and UK by healthcare workers illustrates the heightening contradictions manifested by the escalating class struggle.

Africa must rapidly move towards political and economic unification under socialism in order to effectively tackle the problems of inter-continental cooperation, environmental degradation and public health. The role of the people of the continent will inevitably make an enormous contribution to the broader struggle for the achievement of self-determination, economic justice and social emancipation.

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