

people died, while 15 were killed in Nekemte, western Ethiopia. On August 7th around 500 people also gathered in the main Meskel Square in Addis Ababa.

A main area of dispute is the Wolkayit community, which is seeking to return the Wolkayit District area to the Amhara Regional State from the Tigray Regional State. In 1994 the Wolkayit district was transferred to Tigray, from Gonder Province, now known as Amhara Regional State.

In Gonder between July 12-14th at least 18 security officers were killed when soldiers attempted to arrest the leader of the Wolkayit Committee, Colonel **Demeka Zewdu**, alongside other members, which catalysed protests in the Amhara region.

Protestors have targeted Tigrayans, who are a minority tribe but their members control the government and military; the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is a core part of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition.

Meanwhile the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the armed section of the opposition Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), has carried out a number of attacks against Ethiopian troops in the south of the country.

On July 28th the OLA attacked two military bases in Malab village in Moyale district and also engaged Ethiopian troops in Dhadacha Chame in Moyale district. On the same day the OLA also attacked Gara Gadamsa, reported the opposition *Voice of the Oromo Liberation* (31/7).

Demonstrations began popping up in November 2015 in the Oromia region, which surrounds the capital, due to a government plan to expand the boundaries of Addis Ababa. The Oromo people feared their farmland would be seized.

On August 12th the OLA clashed with Ethiopian troops in Barbarad locality in Warder district, Dolo province; 15 soldiers were killed and 18 more wounded. The previous day Ethiopian troops had reportedly subject locals to beatings in the town of Kebri Dehar, the capital of Koraheyy Province, reported opposition owned *Radio Freedom* (15/8).

Merera Gudina, leader of the Oromo People's Congress (OPC), said, "people are fed up with what the regime has been doing for a quarter of a century. They're protesting against land grabs, reparations, stolen elections, the rising cost of living."

The government has described the protesters as "criminals" and blamed **Eritrea**-based opposition groups for supporting the demonstrators. The government has charged 17 people accused of carrying out terrorist attacks with treason and establishing a new organisation called the United Liberation Front of Oromo (ULFO).

Deputy Prime Minister **Demeke Mekonen** warned, "the government and the general public will not tolerate groups working to bring down the constitutional system by force".

On August 1st Ethiopian troops shot dead six people and wounded 26 others in East and West Harerghe zones; although the killings prompted more protests against the regime.

On May 24th 2016 the ruling EPRDF government won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, which critics and the opposition said were rigged. Those in power are members of an ex-rebel group, the TPLF, which was headed by **Meles Zenawi**, until current President **Hailemariam Desalegn** took over in 2012.

Getachew Metaferia, Professor of political science at Morgan State University in the United States, described the Ethiopian state as "controlled by an ethnic minority imposing its will on the majority," a crucial factor in understanding the protests.

The security services have also dismissed a plea from the UN to allow international observers to investigate the killing of protesters by security forces during the recent anti-government demonstrations. **Multiple Areas of Unrest p. 21076.** (*AFP* 8-15/8 2016; *Al-Jazeera* 11/8; *BBC Monitoring* 28/7, 6/8; *PANA Addis Ababa* 8/8; *The Reporter* 27/7; *Reuters* 11/8; *Zehabesha* 2, 8/8)

Ginbot 7 Members Sentenced: The Ethiopian Federal High Court on August 6th sentenced three senior officials of the opposition **Semayawi Party** for being found making their way to **Eritrea** to join the Ginbot 7 group, labelled as a terrorist organisation by the Ethiopian government. The officials were named as Berhanu Tekleyared, Eyerusalem Tesfaw and Fikremariam Asmamaw, and were sentenced to between four and five and a half years of 'rigorous imprisonment'. (*The Reporter, Addis-Ababa* 6/8)

KENYA

Terrorist Threat

The authorities clamp down on extremism as militant groups continue to target the country.

President **Uhuru Kenyatta** has stated that he will crack down on hate speech across vernacular radio and TV stations, to help maintain peace and stability in the country before and after the upcoming elections. However, the announcement drew mire from opposition leaders.

The opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODC) leader **Raila Odinga** accused the president and the governors of agreeing on resolutions that would undermine the freedom of the media.

According to Director of Criminal Investigations **Ndegwa Muhoro** around 80 cases of terrorism have been through the courts so far in 2016.

Muhoro said that on July 31st six youths were intercepted in Daadab refugee camp in Garissa on their way to join **al-Shabaab** in **Somalia**. Isiolo County Commissioner George Natembeya said over 20 youths had crossed borders and were suspected to have joined al-Shabaab and other terror related groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

On July 14th, a suspected al-Shabaab terrorist was killed while a police officer was injured when a group of over 20 heavily armed terrorists attacked the Mangai Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU) camp in Basuba Ward of Lamu East Sub-County.

On July 25th in Lamu more than five Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) soldiers escaped death narrowly when their military tank ran over a home-made bomb in Kiunga Division of Lamu East Sub-County.

On August 6th al-Shabaab militants in Lamu East injured four police officers during an attack. The assailants forced their way into the Basuba General Service Unit (GSU) until eventually being overpowered and forced to flee into the Boni forest.

According to the *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)* on August 14th police in Mombasa killed two suspected al-Shabaab militants, Salim Hanjary Benzimba and Kibwana Ahmed Abdallah, in the Junda area of Kisauni. Another suspected militant, Ishamail Shoshi, is believed to have escaped.

Ndegwa Muhoro, who opened an Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU) office in Isiolo, said the government was set to open other branches in Moyale and Marsabit towns to counter terrorists and illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries.

Muhoro said that terrorists were changing routes and using the Modogashe-GarbaTulla-Isiolo road after security was intensified along the Garissa –

Nairobi highway. He called on parents, religious and political leaders to work with the government in dealing with radicalisation and terrorism by monitoring activities of the youths.

The Kenyan authorities have put a bounty of Kenyan Shillings 2m (US \$20,000) for the capture of wanted terrorist **Abdullahi Abdi Sheikh**; he is accused of plotting several terrorist attacks and the botched attack on the Baure KDF camp in Lamu.

On August 3rd a police officer was charged with terrorism in relation to an attack on the Kapenguria police station, West Pokot; **Abdi Jelle Ali** was reportedly behind the July 14th incident when seven police officers were killed in a hostage situation that lasted for over nine hours. Jelle was arrested on July 19th in Embu town after making derogatory remarks on his Facebook account in reference to the attack. **Complex Security Situation p. 21076.** (*Daily Nation* 1, 8, 11/8; *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation* 14/8; *The Standard* 4/8; *The Star, Nairobi* 12/8; *Sunday Nation* 31/7)

Rights Groups' Concern Over Killings

A spate of extrajudicial killings including that of human rights activist **Willie Kimani** and his client **Josphat Mwenda**, have sparked concerns that the government is seeking to intimidate lawmakers. Mwenda had filed a complaint against a police officer accused of shooting him in the arm earlier in April 2015 before his body was found on July 1st in Machakos. (p. ???).

Mobilised by **Amnesty International**, 34 Kenyan and international human rights organisations called for government action and thorough investigations. In the 1990s under President **Daniel arap Moi**, the Kenyan Human Rights Commission (**KNCHR**) documented as many as two or three police killings a day. A 2007 report called 'Cries of Blood' documented the extrajudicial killings of 500 people between July and October 2007. **Protests Against Extrajudicial Killings – p. 21077.** (*Africa Confidential* 5/8; © *AFP* 29/7 2016)

Communal Tensions: On August 7th more than 20 houses were set ablaze in Pimbinyet area of Narok Country, after police found a mutilated body, said to have been murdered in a revenge attack. At least five people have lost their lives in retaliatory attacks between the two communities in the area. Soon after the body was picked up by police officers from the Kilgoris police station, fierce fighting broke out, with more than 20 houses being set ablaze. (*Daily Nation* 8/8)

LIBYA

US Air Strikes

Foreign military involvement risks exacerbating the country's deep political divides.

Pro-government forces mid-month dealt a major blow to the Islamic State group jihadists (**ISIS**) in their main Libyan stronghold of Sirte by seizing their headquarters.

Forces loyal to Libya's UN-backed unity government of national accord (**GNA**) made a significant breakthrough on August 10th in their nearly three-month-old offensive to retake Sirte, seizing the Ouagadougou conference centre where ISIS had set up a base, *AFP* reported (11/8).

"The battle for Sirte has reached its final phase, after the successful offensive by our heroes," said spokesman General **Mohamad Ghassri**.

The advance came after the **United States** launched air strikes on ISIS positions in Sirte on August 1st. Later in August it also begun using attack helicopters.

Lieutenant Commander Anthony Falvo, a spokesman for US Africa Command (**AFRICOM**), said on August 23rd Marine Corps AH-1W SuperCobra attack helicopters had joined the operation.

"The Cobras provide additional precision air strike capability," he told *AFP* (23/8) in a phone interview. "It gives us a little bit more flexibility." SuperCobra gunships are based on the USS Wasp, an amphibious assault ship in the Mediterranean. Harrier jets are also being launched from the ship to conduct strikes on Sirte. As of August 22nd, the US had conducted 77 air strikes in the city since the start of "Operation Odyssey Lightning".

Forces allied with the GNA on the 10th seized the University of Sirte campus just south of the Ouagadougou conference centre as well as the Ibn Sina Hospital to the north. On the 11th they removed ISIS flags from the conference centre and the university, burned them and replaced them with Libyan flags, said their command centre. It said they had seized a hotel near the city's port and were clearing a complex of luxurious villas used for hosting dignitaries in the era of former dictator Colonel **Mouamar Gaddafi**. Television aired images of soldiers in recaptured areas waving flags and flashing victory signs.

The pro-GNA forces said 16 of their fighters were killed and dozens wounded on August 10th. It was unclear how many jihadists were killed, but the centre

said at least 20 jihadists had died in fighting for the university campus. Nine pro-GNA fighters were wounded on August 11th and taken to a hospital in Misrata, 190km to the northwest, the hospital said. On August 13th it took control of the "Makmadas" radio station building that had been used by ISIS.

More than 300 pro-government fighters had been killed and 1,800 wounded in the operation, said medical sources Misrata, where the operation's command centre is based. They have faced determined resistance from the jihadists who have struck back with sniper fire, suicide attacks and car bombings.

Reda Issa, another spokesman for the pro-government forces, said jihadists still controlled residential neighbourhoods in Sirte next to the sea. "The liberation of Sirte will only be announced when the whole city is recaptured," he added.

Issa said the pilot and co-pilot of a pro-GNA plane which crashed on August 10th while bombing ISIS positions in Sirte had been killed and their bodies retrieved, without specifying the cause. ISIS claimed to have downed the aircraft.

The *Washington Post* has reported that US commandos are working from a joint operations centre on the outskirts of Sirte, the first time they have directly supported Libyan forces in the anti-ISIS fight.

Quoting US officials speaking on condition of anonymity, the *Post* said the US forces were operating alongside **British** troops, helping to coordinate American air strikes and providing intelligence.

US President **Barack Obama** on August 2nd defended the air campaign, saying defeating the jihadists in Libya was in America's national interest. The raids were authorised by the president on the recommendation of US Defence Secretary **Ash Carter**, *DeutscheWelle* (1/8) reported.

Pentagon spokesman Navy Captain **Jeff Davis** said on the 2nd that the US had conducted seven strikes so far. Two T-72 tanks were among the targets, and Davis said ISIS fighters had been killed, but he did not have an estimate of how many. US drones and fighter jets had by August 11th carried out 29 strikes in Sirte, targeting ISIS fighting positions, vehicles and armaments, according to statements by **AFRICOM** reported by *The Independent* (11/8).

GNA chief **Fayez al-Sarraj** posted a video statement on the GNA's *YouTube* (1/8) page saying: "In light of the enemy using advanced technological equipment... we have expanded our