

# International Intelligence

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## ***FAO: food emergencies in 20 African states***

According to the latest assessment of the food supply situation and crop prospects by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 20 African countries continue to face exceptional food emergencies. FAO's Global Early Warning and Information System (GIEWS) reports that problems are particularly acute in several countries in eastern Africa, in the Great Lakes region, and in Sierra Leone.

A severe drought at the beginning of 1997 substantially reduced secondary-season food production in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, and large parts of southern Ethiopia, while late or erratic rainfall later, led to reduced main-season harvest in Tanzania and Uganda. The latest estimates for these two countries suggest that cereal production will be down by about 30% compared to 1996, while food prices remain high. The Tanzanian government estimates that about 3 million people are facing severe food shortages, and it has recently appealed for 76,000 tons of emergency aid. In Ethiopia, it is officially estimated that 4.6 million people are in need of food aid. In Somalia, severe flooding in October, combined with three consecutive years of poor harvest, have exhausted farmers' stocks, according to the FAO report. Since the Sierra Leone coup in May, food prices have increased sharply and serious shortages are reported leading to spreading malnutrition.

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## ***Netanyahu reneges on next troop pull-out***

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, continuing his provocations, announced in an interview on Jan. 9, that he would renege on agreements previously made with Washington, regarding troop pull-outs from the occupied territories. Netanyahu told the daily *Ma'ariv*, that Israel would make one withdrawal from the occupied territories, instead of the three promised by mid-1998. "You can't ask us to fulfill all our commitments concerning the

pullbacks," he griped, "when they [the Palestinians] haven't fulfilled a single one of their commitments," referring to his provocative demand that the Palestinian Authority guarantee the security of all Israelis, even inside Israel.

According to the Oslo and subsequent agreements, Israel is supposed to give up over 80% of the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian Authority now controls 27%, and is expecting another 60%, in three phases of withdrawal, as negotiated, including 40% in the next stage. Netanyahu has said that he might be willing to hand over 10%. His interview coincided with the conclusion of the failed visit by U.S. Mideast envoy Dennis Ross.

Israel plans to construct 30,000 new units of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, by the year 2020. This is part of the demographic policy, to counter the possible construction of a Palestinian state.

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## ***More Sudan rebels quit Garang's forces***

Newspapers in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum reported on Jan. 8 that more than 7,000 members of the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of John Garang in Bahr Al-Ghazal province, abandoned their positions to pro-government forces and sought refuge in the south of the country. *Al-Jumhuriya* daily quoted Sudanese Army Brigadier Abdul-Rahman Sirr-el-Khatem, that "this is a historical turning point towards peace and unity." *Al-Jumhuriya* reported that 6,000 of the SPLA members, over 48 hours, fled to areas under government control in Tung, Kwajina, Awel, and Waw. Meanwhile, a force of 1,000 rebels camping around Waw, contacted the military commander of the town, to declare their surrender.

This major development started in late December, when the government army and its southern allies launched a large-scale attack on the SPLA bases in Bahr Al-Ghazal region. Sirr-el-Khatem, a spokesman for one of the SPLA units in Waw, told *Al-Jumhuriya* that Karbino Kwanin, a former

southern rebel leader who signed a peace treaty with Khartoum in June 1997, had convinced him to join the peace process. He also stated that "these developments confirm [that] the wall of war has completely collapsed in the face of the continuous calls for peace." He asserted that the SPLA will suffer many such losses in other parts of south Sudan.

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## ***Soros leans on Croatia to end actions vs. OSI***

According to the Dec. 31, 1997 issue of *Nacional*, Zagreb's leading opposition weekly, U.S. Vice President Al Gore "personally requested the Croatian government to stop harassing the operations of the Open Society Institute (OSI), financed by George Soros. An American diplomat has confirmed to *Nacional* that the number-two in the most powerful state in the world also insisted on the urgency of removing all legal obstacles regarding the registration and continuation of the OSI operations." In December 1996, President Franjo Tudjman launched a strong attack against the Open Society and Soros for undermining national sovereignty; shortly afterward, OSI operatives in Croatia were arrested for illegally smuggling money, used to fund anti-Croatia operations.

According to *Nacional*, Gore's request received immediate attention, and on Dec. 22, the Minister of Administration, Davorin Mlakar, informed the Croatian legal authorities that there was no longer any conflict between Zagreb and the OSI.

The *Nacional* investigation also detailed Soros's heavy-handed effort to stop the Croatian legal moves: After his operatives had received suspended sentences, the U.S. State Department issued what *Nacional* called an "unusually scathing statement denouncing the court decision as 'a serious violation of human rights and fundamental principles of a democratic system.'" Soros then mobilized members of the European Parliament to rush through a resolution, demanding Croatia suspend all proceedings against OSI; this, at a time when Zagreb had applied for membership to the European Council and to the European Parliament.