

Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Peace negotiations (per 23 March)

- The office of the Ethiopian Prime Minister issued a statement that the Council of Ministers approved a regulation to establish the "Tigray inclusive interim government" in its session on 18 March.
- The statement confirms that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has confirmed Getachew Reda as the president of the regional interim government.
- The statement also said that Getachew Reda is given the responsibility to ensure the representation of Tigray-based opposition parties and establish an inclusive interim administration, as well as to lead and coordinate the executive body.
- The statement cited the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) Agreement as the context for establishing the interim government in the Tigray region.
- Ethiopia has dropped a draft motion that was intended to end the U.N. human rights investigation in the Tigray war, states Reuters, based on five sources of diplomats and observers.
- The deadline for submitting resolutions to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva was today at 12:00 GMT. The draft resolution circulated by Ethiopia did not appear on the list published by the UN.
- The Ethiopian House of Peoples Representatives has delisted TPLF from the list of terrorist organisations.
- In his press briefing, Debretsion Gebremichael, the Chairman of TPLF commended the decision
- He said that the removal of the terrorist designation will speed up the processes and operation of the interim government and that the TPLF will work with Getachew Reda, the new regional president, for the success of the interim government of the region.
- He also said that the TPLF will undertake internal reforms.

Situation in Tigray (per 23 March)

- The Ethiopian Minister of Defense Abraham Belay said the young Tigrayan generation should strengthen its unity and prepare itself to serve the country, according to the *Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation*.
- The minister said "this should be a moment for heralding the development and reconstruction but not for competing for power in Tigray [...] power struggle will only complicate the existing problems and delay their solutions."

Situation in Ethiopia (per 23 March)

- Benishangul Gumuz's regional government granted amnesty to leaders and members of two opposition political groups, People's Democratic Movement and Benishangul People's Liberation Movement, who have been detained in the past years for alleged attacks on civilians.
 - The reconciliation and amnesty come after the regional government and the active opposition groups signed a peace deal six months ago.
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Regional Situation (per 23 March)

- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) states that it held a joint preliminary meeting between the teams from Sudan and Ethiopia to plan for possible returns of Tigray refugees residing in Sudan to Ethiopia.
- UNHCR noted “Most of the refugees indicated a wish to return home, however, they expressed hesitance towards returning, at least right away.”
- UNHCR reports that there are still 47,200 Ethiopian refugees in East Sudan and nearly 8,800 Ethiopian refugees in the Blue Nile State.
- Renewed conflict in Upper Nile State in South Sudan has caused almost 10,000 new refugees to flee to Sudan since 1 December.
- The Sudanese party SPLM-N released 11 Sudanese army soldiers who were held in South Kordofan. This was confirmed by The United Nations Integrated Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS).
- The soldiers were accused from entering SPLM-N controlled area in military clothing a year ago.
- The Somali Defence Minister stated that 3,000 al-Shabaab fighters have been killed since the start of the army operations against the group.
- The African Union is facing a funding gap of 90 million USD for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. The mission will hand over responsibility for Somalia’s security in 2024, but the AU warns it will not be able to provide effective support if the gap is not filled.
- The AU states that a cut in funding of 60 million USD by the European Union, due to competing interests, is a key cause for the gap.

International Situation (per 23 March)

- Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Adviser Yemane Ghebreab met with Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, reports the Eritrean Ministry of Information.
- The two sides discussed political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military cooperation.
- Saleh stated his position on the “Ukraine pretext that has sadly sacrificed Ukraine and its people for the purpose of destroying the Russian Federation; just as the Taiwan issue is being foisted as a pretext to bring to a halt China’s peaceful rise by any means necessary, including violent conflict”.
- A special PodCast on Russia’s Wagner in Africa (The Horn) was released today. Wagner is a private (para-) military contractor closely linked with Russia. It provides mercenary combat services.
- Wagner has increased Russia's visibility on the continent whilst some African countries have begun to partner with the group on security issues, receiving military support and training.
- scrutiny on Wagner in Africa has increased since the war in Ukraine, where Wagner is involved.

Links of interest

- [A statement from the office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia](#)
- [Ethiopia scraps bid to end UN-ordered Tigray abuses probe early – sources](#)
- [TPLF’s removal from terrorist designation “speeds up establishment, performance of interim admin” Debretsion Gebremichael](#)
- [“ገዢው የትግራይን ልማት እና መልሶ ግንባታ የምናበባበርበት እንጂ ሆልዲንግ የምንሻማበት አይደለም”፡- አብርሃም ባላይ \(ዶ/ር\)](#)
- [Ambassador Mesganu Arga held a discussion with Ambassador Tracy Ann Jacobson on current developments](#)
- [Benishangul Gumuz region releases two rebel groups’ leaders, members following peace accords](#)
- [SPLM-N releases 11 detained Sudanese soldiers](#)
- [UNHCR Sudan Factsheet, January 2023](#)
- [Somalia: 3,000 Al-Shabaab Members Killed in Months - Defense Minister](#)
- [African Union urges nearly \\$90 million for its Somali force](#)
- [Eritrean delegation met and held talks with Mr. Lavrov](#)
- [Russia’s Wagner in Africa](#)

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