

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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Europe External Programme with Africa is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peacebuilding, refugee protection, and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EEPA has published extensively on issues related to the movement and/or human trafficking of refugees in the Horn of Africa and on the Central Mediterranean Route. It cooperates with a wide network of universities, research organisations, civil society, and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and across Africa. The Situation Reports can be found [here](#). To receive the situation report in your e-mail, [click here](#). You can unsubscribe at any moment through the link at the bottom of each e-mail.

Situation in Tigray (per 22 February)

- Residents of Zalambessa, Tigray, urge authorities to rebuild important infrastructure of the town as the basic services including electricity, water, health, and education are lacking.
- 1 million people are estimated to be affected by drought and 4.5 million people are acutely food insecure with the situation predicted to deteriorate in 2024. There are urgent calls to provide emergency seed and fertiliser support, veterinary services, and support for the soil and water conservations.
- Drought is also impacting the education sector. There is an urgent need for emergency school feeding to be scaled up.
- Overall school enrollment remains around 40%, while teaching and learning materials are needed for more than 600,000 students.
- IDPs that live within the host communities are often forced to return to the collective IDP centres due to lack of adequate support and host communities pushing the IDPs away due to strained resources.
- However, collective IDPs sites particularly in Endabaguna, Sheraro, Shire, Adwa, May Hanse, Mekoni, Maichew, Abiy adi and Adigrat are experiencing severe overcrowding.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 22 February)

- Intense fighting in Wollo, Gojjam, and other locations in the Amhara region was reported with a large number of casualties; including reportedly one high-level Ethiopia National Defence Force (ENDF) commander. The Ethiopian government denied he was killed, but his family confirmed his death.
- At least 30 deaths and 10 injured people were reported from in the North Shewa zone in the Amhara region after a drone attack on Monday.
- The drone strike was reportedly directed at the truck transporting civilians that were escaping from the area where clashes had erupted between ENDF and Fano militia.
- Kidnappings for ransom continue in Oromia, mainly on the road from Oromia to Djibouti

Regional Situation (per 22 February)

- The Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland is consistent with international law, according to the statement by the Somaliland Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- The statement also denounced the "irresponsible hate narrative" by Somalia, adding that the Somaliland government is on track with implementing the MoU.
- There are reports of potential recruitment of young men in South Sudan by Sudanese warring factions, warned Nicholas Haysom, the head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- Haysom expressed worries that the supply of firearms might start flowing into South Sudan.

International Situation (per 22 February)

- US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee called for de-escalation of tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia during her meetings with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed.

- Phee highlighted that while the concern of Ethiopia to have an access to the sea is valid, it “should be resolved through talks with the federal Government of Somalia and neighboring states, or possibly as part of a regional approach”.
- Somalia and Turkey signed a defense agreement, under which Turkey will provide training and material support to the Somali Navy for protecting the territorial waters from threat and foreign interference.

Migration Situation (per 22 February)

- Handing over refugees and migrants to the Libyan coast guard in the Mediterranean Sea is unlawful because Libya is not a safe port, stated the highest Italian court in a decision to a lawsuit from 2018. In this case, the Italian private vessel Asso handed over 101 people to the Libyan coast guard.
- European states must end repression, hostile and stigmatising rhetoric, threats and criminalisation of human rights defenders assisting refugees and migrants, urges a new report by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.
- The report calls for reforming laws and policies interfering with the work of human rights defenders as well as establishing effective safety procedures for defenders.
- EU's migration policies have been detrimental for safety and protection of refugees and migrants, according to a new report by MSF.
- Policies are causing refugees to be trapped or detained in places where they face violence; Refugees are often experiencing pushback practices at the EU borders as well as neglect and exclusion preventing them from settling in host countries.
- Albania ratified the migration deal with Italy, stipulating the constructions of two centres by Italy on Albanian territory which will accommodate people rescued at sea while their asylum applications are being processed. The deal has been condemned by many NGOs and experts.

Refugee Situation (per 22 February)

- The insufficient response for refugees fleeing the Sudan conflict to Chad deepens humanitarian needs due to lack of funds and organisations providing services on the ground, states MSF.
- In South Sudan, many refugees from Sudan are stuck in transit centres in border areas for several months.
- Experts fear that with the rainy season approaching, response operations will be further disrupted.
- “We need to be prepositioning assistance right now to make sure that we can sustain a response. [...], and on top of that Chad, South Sudan, they are dealing with their own hunger crises. So this is really crisis building on crisis,” said Annabel Symington, a spokesperson for the World Food Programme.

Situation in Sudan (per 22 February)

- General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, head of Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), visited training camps of armed groups in Darfur, praising their participation in the fight against Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and calling for their integration into the national army once the conflict is over.
- 11 lions from Sudan have been successfully transferred to South Africa under the initiative by Four Paws animal welfare organisation. The response comes a few weeks after carrying out a rescue mission of 48 wild animals from the conflict zone near Wad Madani in January.

Links of interest

[News: Zambassa residents continue plea for infrastructure revival more than a year after Pretoria accord](#)

[News: Drone strike claims lives of at least 30 individuals in North Shewa Zone of Amhara region](#)

[X: MFA Somaliland](#)

[Sudan conflict spilling to South Sudan, UN official warns](#)

[Online Briefing with Molly Phee, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs; Michael Hammer, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa](#)

[Somalia government approves defense deal with Turkey](#)

[Italy's top court: Handing over migrants to Libyan coast guards is illegal](#)

[Protecting the Defenders Ending repression of human rights defenders assisting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Europe](#)

[Death, despair and destitution: The human costs of the EU's migration policies](#)

[Sudan war sends malnutrition rates up across the region - WFP](#)

[Sudanese refugees face gruelling wait in overcrowded South Sudan camps](#)

[Al-Burhan welcomes Darfur groups in “Battle of Dignity,” calls for future integration](#)

[Lions Rescued From Conflict Zone In Sudan Find New Home In South Africa](#)

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