

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 29 February)

- A comprehensive dialogue on the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) Agreement between the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (IRA) and federal government should take place with participation of the African Union, stated IRA.
- In today's meeting, the IRA Cabinet highlighted the urgency of the full implementation of the CoH Agreement. According to the Cabinet, this involves respecting the constitutional borders of Tigray and withdrawal of Amhara armed forces and Eritrean troops from Tigray.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 29 February)

- At least 138 people have been killed and 113 injured since May 2023 in Gambella City, Gog Woreda, and Gambella Woreda as a result of community clashes, reports the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.
- Violence was also perpetrated against South Sudanese refugees residing in the affected areas of Gambella.
- A new offensive by ENDF forces against Fano is reported to have started last Friday in Amhara. However, the first momentum has slowed down as Fano is employing guerilla tactics. Both ENDF and Fano are implementing roadblocks, which hinders movements by civilians.
- Fano has reportedly increased its tactic of assassination of civil servants, including police officers.
- The French journalist who has been detained in Ethiopia since 22 February had acted beyond his legal accreditation and was gathering information on internal political matters, stated Ethiopian authorities on Wednesday. His detention was extended until 1 March.

Situation in Eritrea (per 29 February)

- Eritrea denies claims that Eritrean troops continue to reside in various parts of Tigray, more than a year after signing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, ending a two-year war period.
- "False accusations of the presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray Region in fact refer to [...] the sovereign Eritrean territories that the TPLF had illegally occupied for two decades with impunity. Eritrean troops are otherwise inside Eritrean sovereign territories", said the Eritrean Embassy to the UK and Ireland.
- The human rights situation in Eritrea remains extremely grave and without any improvements, stated Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, at the UN Human Rights Council.
- "The country's troubling human rights situation is a matter of governmental policy", added Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea.
- Human rights defenders also fear persecution and threats by the Eritrean government and often prefer to "work in the shadow or in silence", whether it be in Eritrea or abroad, stated Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders.

Situation in Sudan (per 29 February)

- The logistical route for delivering humanitarian aid by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to Sudan will be diverted from the Red Sea to Jebel Ali port in the United Arab Emirates, because of attacks on Red Sea cargo vessels by Houthi in Yemen.

- The alternative route will make the costs rise by more than 40% and will increase delivery time to more than a month, stated the IRC. This brings additional complications to the already strained supply of humanitarian aid to people affected by the conflict.
- The Sudanese economy has dipped by 40% in 2023 and continues to decrease due to ongoing conflict, stated Gibril Ibrahim, Sudanese Minister of Finance.
- The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) has officially withdrawn all operations from Sudan. The UN Security Council ended the UNITAMS mission on 1 December 2023 allowing for a 3-months period for staff members to leave Sudan.

International Situation (per 29 February)

- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with Kenyan President William Ruto during a state visit to Nairobi. Both leaders pledged to enhance cooperation in trade, investment and transport.
- The US urged the UN Security Council to take action to bring the conflict in Sudan to an end. "The council must act urgently to alleviate human suffering, [and] hold perpetrators to account", said US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield to Reuters.
- South Sudanese oil revenues from the export of the crude oil are impacted by war in neighbouring Sudan as the pipelines pass through conflict-affected areas, stated South Sudanese authorities. With oil-production as a primary source of income, that can have a detrimental effect on a state's economy.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 29 February)

- EU regulations prevent the Frontex coast guard from meeting its search and rescue obligations, while being reliant on EU Member States to act, says a new inquiry by European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly. The inadequate regulations result in ongoing maritime disasters and deaths in the Mediterranean Sea.
- The inquiry further showed that "Frontex has no internal guidelines on issuing emergency signals (e.g. Mayday calls), and that there is a failure to ensure Frontex's fundamental rights monitors are sufficiently involved in decision making on maritime emergencies".
- The initiative by the Ombudsman came after the tragic shipwreck in June 2023, which resulted in over 600 people drowning off the coast of Greece. O'Reilly called on the EU to establish an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the deaths in the Mediterranean.
- 1.14 million asylum applications were received within the EU in 2023 which is the highest number since 2016, according to the European Union Agency for Asylum.
- The IOM and its partners called for 112 million USD needed to sustain aid operations to refugees, migrants and host communities in the Horn of Africa, Yemen, and southern Africa.
- Eastern and Southern migration routes from the Horn of Africa region are among the most perilous and under-reported routes globally.
- Frontex signed a cooperation agreement with the UK on Friday to reduce irregular migration in the English Channel. "This collaboration is rooted in the mutual understanding that effective border management requires close cooperation across borders", stated Frontex.

Links of interest

[News: Tigray announces talks on Pretoria accord implementation will be conducted 'exclusively through AU panel'](#)
[Facebook: Office of the President-Tigray](#)
[Facebook: Ethiopian Human Rights Commission](#)
[Detained French journalist overstepped accreditation, says Ethiopian government](#)
[X: TesfaNews](#)
[55th regular session of the Human Rights Council](#)
[US pushes for UN Security Council action to end war in Sudan](#)
[South Sudan warns of economic collapse due to disruptions in oil pipelines](#)
[Ombudsman calls for changes to EU search and rescue rules and a public inquiry into deaths in Mediterranean](#)
[Asylum applications in EU at highest level since 2015/16 crisis](#)
[IOM calls for \\$112 million for migrants in Africa](#)
[Frontex and the United Kingdom strengthen border management cooperation](#)
[IRC Suspends Red Sea Route for Sudan Aid Amid Rising Cost](#)
[Sudan's economy contracts 40% as war rages](#)
[UNITAMS completes withdrawal from Sudan, urges end to conflict](#)

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