

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Situation in Ethiopia (per 4 March)

- Two Fano units reportedly entered Bahir Dar, Amhara, on Friday in a coordinated attack on a security post close to the city centre. They reportedly looted it, then left before Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) arrived.
- Gunfire was reported by witnesses in Bahir Dar from Thursday evening.
- The Amhara regional government announced that ENDF and security forces would engage in a "joint operation and house-to-house surveillance around Bahir Dar to sweep out the extremist force that had infiltrated into the city".
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church media reported that 11 poetry students were killed in Gaffit Saint Gabriel Church in North Gojjam Diocese, Amhara region. The students were reportedly accused of supporting Fano.
- The French journalist arrested in Ethiopia on 22 February was released on 1 March. He described the detention as difficult, but he was treated well. He left for Paris immediately after his release.
- Over a million people are forecasted to be displaced by floods in the upcoming rainy season between March and May, UN OCHA states.
- Humanitarian aid delivery to Amhara is facing severe access constraints, including insecurity and fuel shortages. At least half of the internally displaced people (IDP) in the region are not receiving aid.
- Women in Oromia share stories of sexual violence, as experts raise the alarm over the prevalence of rape and sexual violence within IDP camps.

Situation in Eritrea (per 4 March)

- Eritreans in The Netherlands are being threatened by pro-government Eritreans, they state. Following clashes in The Hague, they warn about the military character and intimidation at the Eritrean festivals.
- A picture is emerging of a highly coordinated effort by the Eritrean government to control the diaspora, which it calls the 'Fourth Front', through militia-like structures, including Eri-Blood and Eri-Mekhet. The festivals are a key tool in suppressing any challenge to the Eritrean government.

Situation in Sudan (per 4 March)

- Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan stated that he will only accept African Union (AU) mediation if Sudan's membership in the AU is reinstated.
- Seven million people are facing catastrophic levels of hunger in Sudan, and experts predict mass starvation and high numbers of deaths by June unless urgent intervention takes place.
- An online event is organised on 6 March in which experts will discuss the scale of the crisis and the next steps that urgently need to be taken to avoid this scenario.

Situation in South Sudan (per 4 March)

- The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan published a report warning that mass violence and gross human rights violations continue in South Sudan. The conflicts frequently involve the use of children in armed forces and the perpetration of sexual and gender-based crimes.

- The report warns that upcoming election plans may trigger new violence or compound existing conflicts; it states elections must be accompanied by a permanent constitution and Rule of Law institutions.
- The political elite systematically impede civic and political space, including persistent human rights violations against journalists and civil society members, the report states.
- The Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) leadership stated on Friday that it will not participate in the planned elections in South Sudan in December 2024. It argues that the preconditions for credible elections have not yet been met.

Regional situation (per 4 March)

- Delegations of Ethiopia and Kenya met last Thursday and agreed to cooperate on fighting insecurity, reviewing of tariffs and fast-tracking the completion of infrastructure projects to facilitate seamless flow of cargo in relation to the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor project.
- Desert locust outbreaks are currently active in Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan, states the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. Between March and April, the locust outbreaks are expected to reduce due to control operations, reduced rainfall and drying of vegetation.

International Situation (per 4 March)

- The EU called upon the Government of Eritrea to substantiate its claim that it has fully withdrawn Eritrean troops from Ethiopia, in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea.
- It also called for "credible, independent investigations of alleged violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed during the war in Northern Ethiopia," including for victims that were Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia at the time.
- Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Sovereign Council in Sudan Malik Agar met with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa to discuss the conflict in Sudan and possible resolutions.
- Iran attempted to persuade Sudan to allow it to build a permanent naval base at the Red Sea, but was turned down, a Sudanese intelligence official told the Wall Street Journal.
- The Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali al-Sadiq Ali denied this.
- EU High Representative Josep Borrell and EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, issued a statement strongly condemning the ban by Sudanese authorities on the transport of humanitarian aid from Chad to Sudan.
- The statement reminded all parties that denying humanitarian aid can amount to a war crime under international law. "The window to avert the worst is closing rapidly. Sudan is on a verge of a large-scale famine," the EU officials warned.

Links of interest

[Fighting Resumes Between Ethiopian Government and Militants](#)
[French journalist detained in Ethiopia released after a week](#)
[US Raises Alarm Over Ethiopian Rights Abuses Before IMF Visit](#)
[Ethiopia - Situation Report, 1 Mar 2024](#)
[In-depth: Silent Suffering: Tales of gender-based violence echo across conflict hit Western Oromia](#)
[De lange arm van Eritrea reikt tot diep in Brabant, maar er broeit verzet](#)
[The Eritrean 'Fourth Front': Festivals as a tool to control the diaspora](#)
[Iran Tried to Persuade Sudan to Allow Naval Base on Its Red Sea Coast](#)
[Sudan demands full reinstatement to the AU, conditions acceptance of mediation](#)
[Sounding the alarm on Sudan's hunger crisis](#)
[UN reports risk of continued gross human rights violations in South Sudan](#)
[SPLM-IO decides to boycott December elections](#)
[Kenya to 'fast-track' Lapsset projects to woo Ethiopia](#)
[Desert Locust Bulletin 545 \(2 March 2024\)](#)
[HRC 55 - Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea](#)
[Sudan: Joint Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on the ban on cross-border assistance from Chad](#)
[Agar: South Africa's Ramaphosa discuss ways to achieve peace in Sudan](#)

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