

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Situation in Sudan (per 18 March)

- 248 civilian deaths and 347 injuries have allegedly been caused by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Al-Jazira state since the start of the conflict, reports the Emergency Lawyers Initiative (ELI).
- RSF is implicated in violence in 156 locations, whereas the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) airstrikes have reportedly hit 36 locations. Some of the violence was aimed at displacing people.
- SAF captured 14 South Sudanese mercenaries following the recapture of the Radio and Television Corporation headquarters in Omdurman on Thursday. They were allegedly fighting alongside RSF.
- The government of South Sudan has distanced itself from the arrested individuals.
- Violence against civilians in Sudan has increased by 89% between 10 February and 8 March 2024, compared to the four weeks before that, reports ACLED.
- 782 reported fatalities were recorded, with the majority recorded in Khartoum. SAF has engaged in a new offensive strategy, based on infantry skirmishes, artillery shelling, and drone assaults.
- Both SAF and RSF officials are profiting from a war-time economy including the smuggling of food, fuel and medicine, state local witnesses. They are also renting out Starlink satellite internet devices to civilians in areas in which access to the internet has been cut.
- The final report of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) warns that the social fabric of Sudan is torn apart by the war. Increasing mobilisation and arming of civilians may lead to further fragmentation, deepening tensions and more ethnic violence.
- The international community should push for “complementarity, inclusivity and coherence” in its solutions to the crisis in Sudan, states the report.
- 24 million children in Sudan are at risk, states the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. 14 million are in dire need of humanitarian support, 19 million are out of school, and 4 million are displaced.
- Children are at high risk of armed recruitment, particularly in Darfur and eastern Sudan, and there is a sharp increase in the number of children killed or victimised by sexual violence as a weapon of war.
- The UN warns that 5 million people are at risk of catastrophic hunger in the next months. Especially some people in West and Central Darfur are likely to face famine conditions.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 18 March)

- Five workers of the Wonji Sugar Factory near Adama city in Oromia have been found killed after having been kidnapped and held hostage for two weeks. Their bodies were found near the factory.
- Ethiopian authorities have released Abdi Mohamoud Omar, also known as “Abdi Illey”, the former president of Ethiopia Somali region. All charges against him have been dropped.
- He was arrested in 2018 for violations of human rights, inciting ethnic and religious conflict in the Somali region, and destruction of churches and property.
- As President of the Somali region between 2010-2018, he oversaw and commanded the Liyu police, which has been implicated in serious rights abuses against civilians. Human Rights Watch warns that the decision to free him and drop all charges is a setback to impunity for crimes involving senior officials.

- The livelihoods of coffee farmers in the Oromia region is threatened by fighting between the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF). In addition, workers from Amhara cannot travel easily anymore due to the conflict in Amhara, leaving beans unharvested.
- One in two children between 6 and 59 months in refugee camps in Ethiopia is undernourished (wasted, stunted, underweight and micronutrient deficient), states the UN Refugee Agency.
- As the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is set to visit Ethiopia in the next weeks, critics warn that any loan for Ethiopia should be conditioned on serious reforms.

Situation in Tigray (per 18 March)

- As many as 15% of Tigray women raped during the Tigray war are thought to have contracted HIV, states the organisation Hiwyet. It is feared that this may lead to an AIDS epidemic.

Situation in South Sudan (per 18 March)

- Schools in South Sudan have been forced to close indefinitely due to an ongoing heatwave. Temperatures of between 41 and 45 degrees Celsius have been forecast for two weeks.
- 862 civilians were documented as being killed, injured, abducted, or subjected to conflict-related sexual violence by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in the last quarter of 2023. This represented a 35% increase in victims compared to the previous quarter.
- Most violent incidents were related to intercommunal violence. Warrap State was worst affected. Kidnappings have also increased by 54%.

Situation in Somalia (per 18 March)

- Three Somali soldiers died and 27 were injured in a terrorist attack on the SYL Hotel in Mogadishu on Friday. The five attackers were all killed. Somali police identified the attackers as Al-Shabaab.
- Four million people in Somalia, 21% of the population, are facing Crisis or Emergency food insecurity. 1.7 million children face acute malnutrition, of which 430,000 are likely severely malnourished.
- The situation is caused by the lingering effects of the drought and subsequent flooding.

Regional situation (per 18 March)

- Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud arrived in Eritrea on Sunday for a two-day working visit with President Isaias Afewerki. They discussed bilateral ties, as well as regional and international issues.

International Situation (per 18 March)

- The African Union Executive Council has agreed that the next Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) will come from East Africa.
- Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga has expressed interest in the position, as has former Somali Foreign Affairs Minister Fawzia Adam.

Links of interest

[Sudanese lawyers release fresh report about atrocities in Al Jazirah State](#)
[Sudanese army captures South Sudanese mercenaries in Omdurman](#)
[South Sudan government distances itself from citizens arrested fighting in Sudan](#)
[Sudan: Escalating Conflict in Khartoum and Attacks on Civilians in al-Jazirah and South Kordofan](#)
[Sudan war: Army and RSF both profiting from smuggling of vital goods](#)
[Sudan conflict: 24 million children exposed to a year of brutality and rights violations, UN committee says](#)
[UN warns five million could suffer 'catastrophic' hunger in Sudan amid war](#)
[News: Five Wonji Sugar Factory workers found dead after two-week hostage ordeal](#)
[Ethiopia Releases Ex-Politician Implicated in Heinous Crimes](#)
[IMF Ethiopia loan must be conditioned on immediate reforms](#)
[Analysis: Conflict Brews: Coffee growers in Western Oromia battle for beans amidst violence, instability](#)
[In Tigray, Ethiopian women face horrific choice: 'To die or to be raped'](#)
[South Sudan suspends schools due to extreme heatwave](#)
[UNMISS Brief on violence affecting civilians \(October to December 2023\)](#)
[3 dead and dozens injured in hotel attack close to Somalia's presidential palace](#)
[Somalia Situation Report, 17 Mar 2024](#)
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