

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 528 - 21 March 2024

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.

Haiti Matters is a programme under EEPA, within which we are publishing situation reports on a bimonthly basis with the latest developments from Haiti. To receive the situation report on Haiti in your e-mail, [click here](#).

Situation in Sudan (per 21 March)

- A pipeline that transports crude oil from South Sudan to Port Sudan ruptured on Sudanese territory controlled by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in north White Nile State. It is inaccessible due to the conflict.
- The Sudanese government declared a force majeure in its contract to transport South Sudan's oil to the export port due to damages to the pipeline. This has a major impact on South Sudan's economy.
- Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) launched airstrikes targeting RSF positions in El Fasher, North Darfur, on Tuesday, while RSF attacked SAF's strategic military base in Khartoum North attempting to gain control.
- Humanitarian aid from Chad to Sudan is being reportedly transported only via one border point, namely Tine, going to El Fasher. Other points are still completely blocked.
- The governor of Darfur, Minni Arko Minawi, agreed with UN agencies to establish new routes for delivery of humanitarian aid from Port Sudan to Darfur transiting through the Northern State.
- Six people, including community leaders, in Central Darfur have been detained by the RSF for refusing to cooperate with RSF and meet their demands to pay 50% of shares from the community's revenue.
- Bombing carried out by SAF on 14 March hit a school in Hadra village, South Kordofan, killing 11 students, aged between 8-19, and two teachers, according to Justice Africa Sudan. In addition, 48 people were injured.
- Measles and watery diarrhoea have been reported in camps for internally displaced persons in Delling in South Kordofan as well as Buram in South Darfur affecting mainly children. Lack of nutrition and acute shortage of medicines exacerbate spreading of diseases.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 21 March)

- An internal system glitch of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) on Saturday allowed its customers to withdraw or transfer large sums of money, bigger than amounts deposited in their accounts.
 - While there are reports of 2.4 billion Ethiopian Birr being withdrawn or transferred during the system malfunction, the CBE did not confirm any of these claims as the situation is currently being investigated.
 - 50 persons were arrested by the Joint Security and Intelligence Task Force for plotting violence, terror and unrest in Addis Ababa, Oromia and Amhara. Nigatu Gebreyesus was identified as the leader of the group of suspects.
 - The five-month long surveillance operation apprehended suspected persons on Tuesday, together with weapons, incendiary items as well as foreign currencies.
 - 27 people were reportedly killed and more than 40 injured in a series of attacks by the Fano militia and regional police forces in the Oromo special zone since 9 March.
 - Intense fighting was reported around Bahir Dar in the Amhara region in the last week. Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) reportedly moved a lot of troops to Bahir Dar.
 - One of the most senior commanders of Fano, Wubante Abate, was reportedly killed.
-

- Tension mounts in Gambella city after a shooting attack on traffic police by armed men on Monday. Transportation, bank and basic services have been interrupted.

Situation in Tigray (per 21 March)

- Pension payments will be reinstated in Tigray, stated Eyob Tekalign, Ethiopia's State Minister of Fiscal Policy and Public Finance. Pensioners who did not get their pensions since the two-year war in Tigray will receive payments in coming weeks.
- ENDF increased the number of troops in Western Tigray following a meeting with Ethiopia, TPLF and Tigray Interim Administration last week. This is expected to be in preparation for accelerating the return of IDPs to Western Tigray.
- Axum Airport is being renovated after incurring damages during the war in Tigray, stated Ethiopian Airlines Group. The restoration of the airport including the runway, will amount to 300 million Ethiopian Birr (approx. €4.86 million).

International Situation (per 21 March)

- Somaliland's technical committee engaged in consultations with opposition parties, discussing the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Ethiopia in January. No specific details around the MoU or the discussions have been disclosed yet.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 21 March)

- The Libyan Coast Guard obstructed a rescue operation of refugees and migrants carried out by the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in the Mediterranean Sea on Saturday, 16 March.
- While carrying out a rescue operation of more than 140 people, the Libyan Coast Guard carried out a dangerous manoeuvre, threatening the MSF staff in order to stop the operation.
- MSF urged the EU to immediately stop financial and material support to Libya as it is currently "actively supporting violent pushbacks and perpetuating well-known heinous treatment and abuses against migrants and refugees in Libya," said MSF search and rescue representative, Juan Matias Gil.
- The European Union announced a €7.4 billion financial package to Egypt in support of "strategic comprehensive partnership" in the areas of trade, sustainable energy, education, culture, private sector, as well as €200 million for managing migration.
- The financial deal raised a wave of criticism as experts fear breaching of refugee and migrant rights and the EU's potential complicity in abuses through financial involvement in border control. Human rights should be adhered to during execution of the deal, stated European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly.
- O'Reilly further urged for strict transparency of operationalisation of the deal "because otherwise it looks as if the money is being given, but everything that happens next is slightly more opaque".
- A hepatitis E viral infection broke out in refugee camps in eastern Chad which host over 550,000 Sudanese refugees, states MSF. Hepatitis E, which spreads through contaminated water, brings great health risks for refugees as well as host communities.
- So far, 954 cases of hepatitis E among refugees have been recorded, including 11 pregnant women.

Links of interest

- ['Major rupture' in Sudan oil pipeline](#)
- [Renewed clashes erupt between Sudanese army and RSF in Khartoum Bahri](#)
- [Measles spreading in Sudan, rabies in South Kordofan](#)
- [Community leaders detained in Central Darfur as they refuse to cooperate with RSF](#)
- [Darfur relief efforts get boost with new aid routes](#)
- [Commercial Bank of Ethiopia glitch lets customers withdraw millions](#)
- [News: Joint task force announces arrest of 50 suspects "plotting violence, terror" targeting Addis Abeba](#)
- [Ethiopia Releases Ex-Politician Implicated in Heinous Crimes](#)
- [News: Tension mounts in Gambella city over shooting of traffic police officer](#)
- [የአካላዊ ሌርታ ለግንኙነት ከ300 ሚሊዮን ብር በላይ በሆነ ወጪ እየተካሄደ መሆኑ ተነገረ](#)
- [Ethiopia: Federal gov't announces resumption of pension payments for Tigray pensioners](#)
- [Somaliland's Technical Committee Responsible for MOU with Ethiopia Convenes Consultative Meeting with Opposition Parties](#)
- [EU-sponsored shameful abuse in the Central Mediterranean must end](#)
- [EU and Egypt sign €7.4 bn deal focussed on energy, migration](#)
- [Ombudsman raises concern over EU migration deal with Egypt](#)
- [Urgent action needed as hepatitis E spreads through Sudanese refugee camps in Chad](#)

Disclaimer: All information in this Situation Report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eeпа.be any additional information and corrections.