

# 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 Sudan (per 10 May)

- Heavy fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) along the road connecting El Obeid city, North Kordofan, with White Nile. Operations initiated by SAF aim to advance toward Mount Kordofan and Umm Ruwaba which are under the control of RSF.
- Attacks by the RSF and allied militias in El Geneina as well as in other towns and villages in West Darfur targeting the Massalit people and other non-Arab communities constitutes ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, states a new report by Human Rights Watch (HRW).
- Through interviews with refugees and by analysing photos, videos and satellite imagery, the HRW report documented massacres and crimes committed between April and November 2023.
- HRW calls on the UN and African Union to urgently implement a nationwide ban on arms, impose sanctions on commanders, officials, and militia leaders responsible for crimes in West Darfur, as well as launch an investigation on the intent behind the attacks on Massalit and non-Arab communities.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) suspended work in Wad Madani Teaching Hospital in Al-Jazirah state due to growing insecurity, harassment and obstructions faced by MSF staff members.
- "The deliberate administrative blockages, the increasing insecurity, and the constant violations of the hospital as a neutral space made it impossible to continue providing services", said Mari Carmen Viñoles, operations manager for MSF in Sudan.

### Situation in Tigray (per 10 May)

- The Tigray Interim Regional Administration (IRA) strongly denied accusations made by RSF that "TPLF forces" have been fighting alongside SAF in the Sudanese conflict.
- "Tigray has no reason to meddle in the ongoing civil war for it would further harm a country regarded by Tigrayans as their second home", said the official statement by the IRA.

### Situation in Ethiopia (per 10 May)

- The Ethiopian Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) has announced plans to address safety concerns and improve essential services at the Awlala and Kumer refugee sites in the Amhara region.
- This decision comes after at least 1,000 Sudanese refugees fled the Kumer camp due to violence.
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was forced to quit its investigation of the death of Bate Urgessa, Political officer of the opposition Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), "to ensure the safety of the investigative experts, witnesses, and people involved in the investigation".
- Bate Urgessa was found dead in his hometown of Meki in April 2024.
- According to the EHRC, witnesses as well as family members of Bate Urgessa were detained by the police and an evidence-gathering team was followed by unidentified people and vehicles during their work in Meki city, Oromia region, which prompted EHRC to stop the work after only 3 days of investigation.
- Blood collection has been restricted to cities and towns due to insecurity problems across several regions in Ethiopia, stated the Ethiopian Blood and Tissue Bank.

## International Situation (per 10 May)

- The US Embassy in Asmara, Eritrea, will resume visa services for Eritrean citizens and residents from 14 May.
- Visa restrictions under the US Immigration and Nationality Act are still imposed on Eritrean high-ranking government officials, People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) party officials in national leadership as well as their family members - spouses and children under 21 years old.

## Regional Situation (per 10 May)

- Somalia has reportedly requested termination of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) after its mandate expires in October 2024.
- In a letter to the UN Security Council, Somali Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Moalim Fiqi requested the end of the mission without indicating specific reasons, stating that "it is now appropriate to transition to the next phase of our partnership".
- Kenya is hosting South Sudanese peace talks between the government and opposition groups to stop the conflict which has been detrimental for South Sudan's peace, stability and economy. Presidents of several African countries attend the mediation event.
- Kenya and Somalia signed a bilateral agreement establishing cooperation in political consultations, education initiatives, and defence matters.

## Refugee and Migration Situation (per 10 May)

- Sudanese refugees face dire conditions in Iridimi, Alacha, Adré, and Gaga refugee camps in Chad due to lack of security, health problems, and shortage of food, water and medicines. Refugees from Irdimi camp organised a protest demanding adequate assistance from the authorities.
- 1.3 million of South Sudanese refugees have voluntarily returned back to South Sudan since 2018, according to UNHCR. More than 45,000 of South Sudanese refugees were prompted to return from Sudan due to ongoing conflict.
- The Czech Republic and Denmark initiated a letter to the European Commission suggesting to transfer migrants attempting to reach the EU to selected third countries before they reach EU shores. The letter is supported by a group of EU Member States including the Netherlands, the Baltic states and Italy.
- The strategy of outsourcing the asylum procedures and seeking agreements with third countries will be discussed during the migration conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, scheduled on Monday.
- The EU Border Agency Frontex can be deployed in the entry point locations in Belgium, such as airports and Brussels-Midi railway station, after the Belgian Parliament approved a bill by Justice Minister Paul Van Tigchelt and Home Affairs Minister Annelies Verlinden.
- Up to 100 Frontex agents may be deployed and work under the supervision of the Belgian federal police.
- 87 refugees and migrants that left from Zawiya, Libya, were rescued in the Mediterranean Sea by the Italian NGO 'Emergency' on Friday last week.

## Links of interest

[Sudan army routed in heavy fighting along El Obeid-Kosti road](#)  
["The Massalit Will Not Come Home" Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan](#)  
[MSF forced to suspend essential support in Wad Madani due to obstructions and harassment](#)  
[IRA statement on RSF's baseless allegations against Tigray involvement in the Sudanese conflict](#)  
[Rapid Support Forces: Media Statement](#)  
[News: Gov't pledges to address safety concerns at refugee sites following incident in Amhara region](#)  
[News: Rights Commission calls for prompt, impartial investigation into Bate Urgessa's killing](#)  
[U.S. Embassy in Eritrea](#)  
[In surprise move, Somalia asks UN to end political mission](#)  
[Kenya hosts South Sudan peace talks joined by African leaders](#)  
[New refugees from Darfur face dire conditions in Chad](#)  
[1.3 million South Sudanese returned home since 2018: UNHCR](#)  
[Member states push to outsource migration procedures to non-EU countries](#)  
[Frontex can be deployed at Brussels-Midi and Brussels Airport](#)  
[Almost 90 migrants, including women and children, rescued off Libyan coast](#)

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