

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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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 21 May)

- At least 16 Ethiopians, mostly undocumented refugees, were arrested by the Sudanese security forces in Gedaref State in a security campaign targeting both Sudanese people and foreigners.
- Around 23 Sudanese people have also reportedly been arrested. The arrests follow fears and xenophobia around alleged support for the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).
- Beja leaders in eastern Sudan met with Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan last week to discuss peace between the communities in the region. However, some Beja groups have criticised the initiative, calling it a ploy by Islamists in the security service.
- Several armed groups in eastern Sudan continue to train troops in Eritrea. They call on potential recruits on social media to join the training camps in Eritrea.
- Escalating violence in El Fasher, North Darfur, is leading to new displacements, states the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Toby Harward. Artillery attacks by the RSF and aerial bombardments by SAF have killed at least 58 people since last week.
- Displaced people are sheltering in and around El Fasher without any basic supplies.
- An estimated 1,000 refugees cross the border from Darfur to Chad each day.
- Video footage emerged of the execution of retired Lieutenant Mohamed Siddiq by the RSF. The video sparked widespread condemnation on social media. Siddiq played a role in the protests that ousted former President Omer al-Bashir.
- Humanitarian organisations in Sudan have warned Elon Musk against shutting down the Starlink network in jurisdictions where it is not licensed, as many aid groups rely on the internet services of Starlink to deliver humanitarian aid.
- The imminent shutdown risks disrupting communications networks between civilians and aid groups.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 21 May)

- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reshuffled his cabinet, appointing Minister of Irrigation and Lowlands, Aisha Mohammad, back to the Ministry of Defense, while the Minister of Defense, Abraham Belay, has been appointed as Minister of Irrigation and Lowlands.
- Appointments also include Mohammad Indris, who has been serving as Director General of the Ethiopian Diaspora Services since August 2022 and is now appointed as Minister of State at the Coordination Center for Democracy Building.
- The Ethiopian Meteorological Institute predicts above-normal rainfall for the upcoming season, particularly over central and south Tigray, Afar, East Amhara, northern Somali regions.
- The rain may cause flooding which can impact livelihoods.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that the negotiations with Ethiopia in relation to a bailout are progressing, but there is no indication of when the negotiations will finish. Since the IMF visit to Ethiopia in March, negotiations have taken place virtually.
- Journalist Ann Neumann describes how her fixer in Ethiopia was kidnapped from Addis Ababa two weeks after he guided her in her work to report on the Tigray war, in the summer of 2022.

- The fixer was brought to Oromia, where he was interrogated and kept for three weeks, then moved back to a police station in Addis Ababa where he was kept for another three weeks. His wife paid over 500 USD for his release.

Situation in Eritrea (per 21 May)

- Reverend Ghirmay Araya has passed away in prison in Eritrea, after being incarcerated for years, states Release Eritrea. He suffered from diabetes and other illnesses.
- Rev. Ghirmay was one of the founding members of the Full Gospel Church, which was banned in Eritrea. Rev. Ghirmay's sons are still in prison.

Situation in South Sudan (per 21 May)

- South Sudan People's Movement/Army (SSPM/A) leader Stephen Buay Rolnyang threatened to withdraw from the high-level peace mediation process hosted in Nairobi, Kenya, stating that he has faced two assassination attempts.
- This comes after a "commitment declaration" for peace was signed on Thursday last week, which is described as a first milestone in the ongoing talks.

International Situation (per 21 May)

- Threats by Eritrean regime supporters against pro-democracy Eritreans in Israel have increased in the runup to Eritrean independence day on 24 May, warns the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants.
- This comes as a pro-democracy Eritrean community leader was stabbed to death by regime supporters on 9 May. The man killed had been earlier arrested without legal grounds following the demonstrations in Israel on 2 September 2023.
- This is part of a system of "systematic and organized persecution" by the Eritrean regime, while the Israeli authorities are also targeting Eritrean refugees with detention in hopes that they will 'voluntarily' leave the country, Hotline describes in its report "Dictatorship Beyond Borders".
- The Dutch government is insufficiently informed about the tensions in the Eritrean community in the Netherlands, Dutch media NOS and Nieuwsuur state.
- Experts from countries other than The Netherlands, had warned about the possibility of violent clashes, which have occurred in many places. In addition, governments such as Norway and Sweden have investigated the widespread transnational repression by Eritrean authorities.
- Experts warn that the complaints of young Eritreans who are tired of intimidation by the long arm of Eritrea should be taken seriously.
- Today the court in The Netherlands hears the case of the Federation Eritrean Networks (FEN) who argue that the local authority in Rijswijk unlawfully banned a festival organised by the Eritrean community.
- The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the US ambassador to Ethiopia of "allegations and unsolicited advice to the Government of Ethiopia on how best to run the affairs of the country", following a speech by the ambassador on peacebuilding in Ethiopia.

Links of interest

[Crackdown in Gedaref targets foreigners](#)

[‘Hell on Earth’ as violence escalates in Sudan’s el-Fasher](#)

[Eastern Sudan: Beja working on tribal reconciliation, militarisation continues](#)

[RSF execution of popular former military sparks outrage and condemnation](#)

[Starlink internet shutdown in Sudan will punish millions, Elon Musk warned](#)

[Ethiopia: PM Abiy reshuffles Cabinet, Aisha Mohammed back as Defence minister](#)

[Ethiopian meteorologists warn of heavy rainfall impact on health, agriculture](#)

[As a war reporter, I trusted my fixer with my life. Two weeks later, he was kidnapped](#)

[IMF Notes “substantial Progress” In Dragging Ethiopia Bailout Negotiations](#)

[Reverend Ghirmay Araya](#)

[South Sudan General Threatens to Leave Ruto-Led Peace Talks After Assassination Attempt](#)

[South Sudan government and rebel groups sign ‘commitment’ for peace in ongoing peace talks in Kenya](#)

[“Dictatorship Beyond Borders” – Report about the long arm of the Eritrean regime in Israel](#)

[Weinig zicht op dreiging vanuit de Eritrese gemeenschap](#)

[Engaging in constructive diplomacy](#)

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