

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 23 May)

- The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reportedly bombed several neighbourhoods in El Fasher and the nearby Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced people (IDPs), resulting in multiple civilian deaths and injuries and widespread destruction on Sunday.
- The RSF used artillery and rocket launchers, targeting various parts of the city, leading to the collapse of buildings and forcing many residents to flee.
- Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), announced plans to formalise the volunteer forces fighting alongside SAF, known as the Popular Resistance, into official army brigades equipped with vehicles and weaponry.
- Al-Burhan emphasised the critical role of volunteer forces, noting they make up three-quarters of the current fighting force and will now fight alongside regular soldiers.
- As schools in Sudan reopen amidst ongoing displacement crisis, Sudanese authorities face challenges balancing educational needs with providing shelter for displaced people. Schools in Northern State and West Kordofan reopened on Monday while El Gedaref aims to start next week.
- UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu, warned that Sudan shows the signs of genocide and it may already have occurred. She emphasised the urgent need for civilian protection.
- Civilians, particularly in Darfur and El Fasher, are targeted based on their ethnicity, with RSF and allied militias conducting ethnically motivated attacks, inciting violence, and displacing populations, said Nderitu, addressing the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

Situation in Tigray (per 23 May)

- Seven civilians, including an eleven year old child, were killed by unidentified gunmen, during a night attack on Monday in the Raya Azebo district, near the border between Tigray and Afar. The perpetrators are believed to have arrived from Afar, according to Tezera Getahun, head of the Raya Azebo district.
- The Tigray Regional Interim Administration called on the Afar regional government and the Ethiopian federal police to investigate the attack and track down the perpetrators.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 23 May)

- One of the Fano militia commanders, Eskinder Nega, responded positively to the call by the US ambassador Ervin Massinga to Ethiopian armed groups, including Fano, to enter into dialogue to resolve disputes.
- Other Fano commanders have rejected dialogue as long as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed remains in power. Ambassador Massinga's speech has been rejected by the Ethiopian federal government, calling it undiplomatic and ill-informed.
- Almost 9 million children were out of school across Ethiopia in the first quarter of 2024 due to emergencies, according to the Ethiopia Education Cluster.
- Most interventions in the education sector have been focused on Tigray; however, 1 million children still remain out of school in this region with many schools being damaged or used as shelter for IDPs.

International Situation (per 23 May)

- The District Court in The Hague, The Netherlands, ruled on Wednesday that the municipality of Rijswijk city may ban the Eritrean festival that was originally scheduled for Saturday. The festival was organised by Eritrean regime supporters on the occasion of the Eritrean Independence Day.
- Rijswijk Mayor, Huri Sahin, decided to ban the festival to prevent riots amid rising tensions between Eritrean regime supporters and pro-democracy Eritreans.
- Ethiopia has upgraded its consular office in Hargeisa, Somaliland, to full embassy status, said Ali Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Information, Culture, and National Guidance of Somaliland. It was also confirmed by the Somaliland President, Musa Bihi Abdi, last week.
- The Ethiopian federal government has not issued an official statement yet.
- South Sudan has stopped payments to civil servants due to instability in the economy stemming from the low oil revenues, confirmed the South Sudanese Minister of Finance, Awou Daniel Chuang.
- Kenyan President William Ruto arrived in Atlanta, United States, for a state visit on Monday. The US President is scheduled to receive President Ruto in Washington today.
- It is expected that the main discussion between presidents will focus on trade and security partnerships.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 23 May)

- The EU has been backing, funding, and participating in operations in North African countries “to dump” refugees and migrants in deserts or remote regions in order to stop them from reaching Europe, according to a new investigation report by Lighthouse Reports.
- The financing is hidden behind “migration management” programs, however, the EU is aware and in several instances directly involved in the operations in North Africa, states the report.
- Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer stated that the EU should adopt the UK's approach of outsourcing migration and asylum processing to African countries, following a meeting with British PM Rishi Sunak. 15 EU member states expressed their support in this approach last week.
- A newly formed Dutch right-wing coalition, led by Geert Wilders, aims to submit “an opt out clause” to the European Commission to counter newly adopted European asylum and migration policies.
- With stronger border controls and stricter rules for asylum seekers arriving in the Netherlands, the coalition aims to curb migration.
- Around 3,000 unaccompanied children arrived in Trieste, Italy, in 2023, constituting a 112% rise compared to the previous year, according to the International Rescue Committee (IRC).
- 1,373 people arrived in Italy by sea in the first quarter of 2024 out of which 1,086 were unaccompanied minors, stated IRC.
- More than 33,000 Sudanese refugees arrived in Uganda with more than 50% arriving in Kampala since the beginning of 2024. The surge in arrivals puts pressure on protection and services provided to refugees and host communities in Uganda.

Links of interest

[RSF bombs hit North Darfur capital and displaced camp](#)
[Sudanese army to reorganise volunteer forces fighting RSF](#)
[Sudan schools to re-open as displaced shelters face uncertain future](#)
[UN official: 'Real and growing' risk of genocide in Sudan](#)
[News: Seven civilians, including child, killed in midnight attack on Tigray-Afar border](#)
[Tigray Communication Affairs Bureau](#)
[Fano Commander Eskinder Nega Responds to US Call for Dialogue](#)
[Ethiopia Education Cluster Quarterly Newsletter January - March 2024](#)
[Rijswijk mag Eritrees bevrijdingsfeest verbieden van de rechter](#)
[News: Somaliland Minister says Ethiopia upgrades Consular in Hargeisa to full-fledged embassy](#)
[South Sudan halts civil servant pay amid dwindling oil revenue](#)
[Ruto on first state visit by Kenyan leader to US in two decades](#)
[Desert Dumps](#)
[Austria expresses wish to adopt UK-like Rwanda policy, backed by 14 EU members](#)
[New Dutch government will aim to 'opt out' of EU asylum rules](#)
[IRC in Trieste: Number of Unaccompanied Children on the Move Has Doubled](#)
[Uganda's open-door policy for refugees strained by arrivals from Sudan, DRC, and South Sudan](#)

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