

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 718 - 01 April 2026

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 01 April)

- At least 3,396 survivors of sexual violence, out of which 97% are women and girls, have been registered at the health facilities run by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in North and South Darfur between January 2024 and November 2025. MSF warned the figure represents only a fraction of actual cases.
- MSF further described the use of sexual violence as a deliberate "weapon of war" used to control civilians and target specific ethnic communities, including the non-arabic Zaghawa community.
- Sudanese university professors entered a third consecutive day of a nationwide strike with organizers reporting full participation across 35 universities.
- Security forces have reportedly arrested several academics in El Obeid, Ed Damazin, and Omdurman.
- University professors demand implementation of a revised salary structure amid mounting economic pressure from rising inflation.
- Darfur Governor Minni Arko Minawi urged the UN to replace the Adre crossing at the Sudan-Chad border, alleging the Rapid Support Forces and United Arab Emirates (UAE) are using it for military logistics. The border crossing between Sudan and Chad is instrumental for aid delivery.
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned that a severe funding gap has forced the World Food Programme to cut rations and reduce beneficiaries from 11.5 million to 8.5 million.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 01 April)

- Ethiopia's fuel crisis deepens after more than 180,000 metric tons of fuel failed to arrive due to disruptions linked to the ongoing Middle East conflict.
- Ethiopian authorities and state-owned companies have begun implementing fuel-saving measures, as the country's daily white diesel supply is cut back from 9.2 million liters to 4.5 million liters.
- 658 individuals, including government officials, have been reportedly arrested by Ethiopian authorities in connection with illegal fuel trade and hoarding. Authorities also seized more than 720,000 liters of fuel, which has since been returned to state control.

International and regional situation (per 01 April)

- The first preliminary hearing in the trial of Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam took place in Zwolle, The Netherlands, on 31 March 2026.
- Kidane is an Eritrean national who has been accused of being part of the criminal organisation and running a detention center in Libya in which thousands of Eritrean refugees were abused and extorted for ransom money.
- The prosecution filed 8 charges of human smuggling, 2 charges of rape and 3 charges of extortion.
- The defense lawyer filed a motion to recuse 2 judges who previously sentenced another human smuggler, Teweled Goitom (Walid), to twenty years in prison, claiming their involvement in the Walid case affects their impartiality in the present case. The ruling on impartiality will be delivered by a separate committee of judges.
- The next hearing in Kidane's trial is scheduled for 18 May at 13.30pm in Zwolle.

- At least 74 mine workers were killed by gunmen in the mineral-rich Jebel Iraq area of Central Equatoria state in South Sudan, with the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) forces accusing each other.
- Neither side has confirmed the responsibility and calls have been made for launching a formal investigation.
- Somalia's federal forces took full control of Baidoa, the largest city in Southwest state, after the fights erupted between federal and regional forces, prompting the regional president Abdiyaz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen to resign.
- The UN Secretary-General's office expressed concern over escalating attacks on civilians across Sudan, with aid operations in Blue Nile state largely suspended and humanitarian workers in Darfur facing armed robberies and being forced to halt their operations altogether.
- The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Guang Cong, visited Sudan for the first time to assess the country's evolving security and political situation, emphasizing the urgent need for international action against the atrocities committed against civilians.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 01 April)

- The European Parliament approved a law which allows EU member states to set up "return hubs" outside the EU aimed at speeding up the return of 'irregular migrants' in larger numbers. The law also increased the legal detention period to up to two years.
- The bill, which was passed by 389 MEP votes, is now expected to be discussed between the EU Parliament and the Member States.
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) appealed for \$277 million to support displaced people across Sudan and refugees in the neighboring countries in 2026, as the crisis which has been affecting an estimated 33.7 million people, the highest figure globally, enters its third year.
- Europol launched the European Center Against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS) in The Hague, the Netherlands, to intensify efforts against human smuggling networks, focusing on digital operations, open-source intelligence, and financial tracking to dismantle criminal gangs.
- The IOM released a report on migration along the Eastern Southern Africa Route in the period January–September 2025, documenting migration trends across multiple countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya.
- Six Sudanese nationals have died in Egypt's detention centres in the past 45 days, according to the Refugee Platform in Egypt calling for an independent investigation of the incidents as Egyptian authorities offer conflicting explanations.
- The situation for Sudanese refugees in Egypt has been deteriorating in the past years with many being detained without any legal justifications.

Links of interest

- [Report: Surviving the sexual violence crisis in Darfur | MSF](#)
- [In Sudan, sexual violence is a "weapon" among many | Africanews](#)
- [Sudan professors' strike enters third day as more arrests reported - Dabanga Radio TV Online](#)
- [Darfur governor asks UN to replace Adre crossing, citing military use](#)
- [News: Ethiopia's fuel crisis deepens as '180,000 metric tons fail to arrive', daily white diesel supply cut by half](#)
- [News: Over 650, including govt officials, detained as Ethiopia cracks down on illegal fuel trade amid deepening shortages](#)
- [IOM Moves to Expand Response in Sudan, Appeals for USD 277 Million | International Organization for Migration](#)
- [South Sudan mine attack kills 74 as government and opposition trade blame](#)
- [Somali army takes over key city in Southwest as state leader resigns](#)
- [UN alarm at constraints on humanitarian access across Sudan amid ongoing attacks - Dabanga Radio TV Online](#)
- [Guterres' Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa: Sudan Crucial Element for Regional Stability](#)
- [Beruchte mensensmokkelaar hekelt aangiftes, want 'kreeg nooit klachten'](#)
- [SITUATION REPORT SPECIAL - KIDANE HEARINGS No. 717 - 31 March 2026](#)
- [EU Parliament approves controversial bill to increase migrant returns](#)
- [IOM Moves to Expand Response in Sudan, Appeals for USD 277 Million | International Organization for Migration](#)
- [Europol launches new unit to fight migrant smugglers - InfoMigrants](#)
- [Migration Along the Eastern Southern Africa Route \(January–September 2025\) - Report 2 | January–September 2025 Publication](#)
- [Six Sudanese have died in Egyptian custody in six weeks, says refugee group](#)

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@eepea.be any additional information and corrections.