

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 728 - 15 May 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.

International and regional situation (per 15 May)

- United States (US) Department of State Secretary Marco Rubio held a bilateral meeting with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Gedion Timotheos in Washington, United States, on 11 May. The discussion was aimed at further strengthening the longstanding bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the US.
- The US has urged South Sudan to restore peace and implement the 2018 peace agreement, warning that genuine political dialogue is not credible while Vice President Riek Machar remains detained and on trial.
- The US imposed visa restrictions on South Sudanese transitional government members accused of undermining peace and engaging in corruption that fuels conflict.
- The US also accused the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) of displacing 300,000 people in northern Jonglei State and warned it will continue to hold officials threatening peace accountable.
- United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres and African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssef convened the Tenth AU-EU Conference in Addis Ababa calling for peace and 'Silencing the Guns', on 13 May.
- Judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) will hear evidence against Khaled Mohamed Ali El Hishri between 19 and 21 May to determine whether the case against him will proceed to trial. El Hishri was arrested in Germany in 2025 for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Libya.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has begun operating its RED aircraft from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to facilitate movement of humanitarian personnel to Sudan.
- 31% of the Somali population is experiencing critical food insecurity between April and June 2026, according to a joint press release from OCHA, FAO, WFP and UNICEF.
- Negotiations between Somalia opposition leaders and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud related to the country's electoral framework ended on 13 May without an agreement.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 15 May)

- A bus was attacked in Benishangul-Gumuz Region, in western Ethiopia, by a group of armed men on 12 May, killing over 30 people. The motives of the attack are unknown.
- Arms export restrictions on Ethiopia, which were imposed during the 2-year Tigray war, were lifted by the US State Department's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls.

Situation in Sudan (per 15 May)

- Drone strikes targeting Nyala, South Darfur, were launched by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on 12, 13 and 14 May. Targets included the airport, the industrial zone and the University of Nyala complex.
- Sudan rejected the Banjul Declaration on Sudan adopted by the African Union (AU) and UN fact-finding Mission, arguing it lacks a legal basis. The Declaration was adopted during the 87th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- The declaration calls for investigations into war crimes, protection of civilians, humanitarian access, and accountability for abuses by all parties.

- Civilian vehicles were hit by drone strikes in Karnoi, North Darfur, causing several casualties and destroying transport trucks travelling from Tina to Kutum, according to the Karnoi Emergency Room.
- At least 880 civilians were killed by drone strikes in Sudan between January and April, according to the UN which warned that armed drones have become the leading cause of civilian deaths and risk pushing the war into a deadlier phase.

Refugee and migration situation (per 15 May)

- A migrant smuggling network was dismantled in Tripoli, Libya, with three Somali nationals and one Libyan suspect arrested for allegedly organising sea crossings via Libya's coastline in coordination with local partners.
- Hundreds of migrants and refugees have recently been rescued near the south of Crete after departing from Libya. Greece has warned that up to 550,000 migrants in Libya may attempt to reach Europe, as it tightens border controls and detention policies to deter arrivals and accelerate returns.
- Five Tunisian refugee aid workers will stand trial today after appealing sentences for allegedly facilitating irregular migration. The charges are widely criticized as criminalizing their humanitarian work assisting asylum seekers with accommodation and basic support.
- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and global humanitarian NGO network ICVA have launched a new digital platform for mapping aid services and protection gaps along the Western Africa Atlantic Migration Route.
- The second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) took place from 5 to 8 May, bringing member states and stakeholders together at the UN headquarters to assess progress on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and set priorities for its implementation over the next five years.
- Evidence suggests the GCM is improving migration coordination, but dangerous migration journeys persist and even intensify. The Forum called for safer pathways and stronger international cooperation.
- The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Libya and UN Resident Coordinator met with a Group of African Ambassadors in Tripoli to exchange views on combatting smuggling and human trafficking of migrants and refugees.
- Germany and several other EU Member States have not finalised their preparations for the implementation of The Common European Asylum System, which comes into effect from 12 June, states a new report by the EU Commission.
- The report cites gaps in border procedure capacities, health screening resources and the need to resolve issues with the Eurodac system that aims to collect biometric data of asylum applicants.

Links of interest

- [Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Gedion](#)
- [US official urges South Sudan authorities to uphold 2018 peace agreement | Africanews](#)
- [U.S. announces visa restrictions for individuals undermining South Sudan peace - Radio Tamazuj](#)
- [In Addis Ababa, Guterres urges reforms to give Africa stronger global voice](#)
- [ICC: Hearing to Confirm Charges against Libyan Suspect El Hishri](#)
- [ICRC RED Aircraft to Operate from Jeddah to Strengthen Humanitarian Access to Sudan](#)
- [OCHA/FAO/WFP/UNICEF: UN agencies warn of worsening hunger and malnutrition crisis in Somalia as famine risk emerges](#)
- [Somalia Election Talks Stall in Mogadishu as Dispute Deepens](#)
- [Survivors recount deadly ambush on civilian buses, gov't pickup truck in Benishangul-Gumuz as over 30 killed, dozens injured](#)
- [News: U.S. lifts Ethiopia arms export restrictions imposed during Tigray war](#)
- [Sudanese army intensifies drone strikes on RSF strongholds in Nyalá](#)
- [Sudan rejects African-UN call for crimes probe](#)
- [Drone strikes kill civilians in North Darfur's Karnoi](#)
- [SPLM-RDC backs efforts to form anti-war bloc, warns against Islamist role](#)
- [Sudan drone strikes killed at least 880 civilians between January and April, UN says | Euronews](#)
- [Criminal Investigation Department dismantles migrant smuggling network in Tripoli | The Libya Observer](#)
- [Migration is getting riskier even as progress is made](#)
- [Greece: Hundreds of migrants rescued and discovered over last two days](#)
- [More than half a MILLION migrants massing in north Africa ready to cross into Europe](#)
- [Tunisia: End Abusive Prosecution of Refugee Aid Workers](#)
- [UNHCR and IOM Launch New Digital Dashboard to Track Refugee Protection Services Along Migration Routes](#)
- [International Migration Review Forum 2026](#)
- [UN Mission and African Ambassadors in Tripoli discuss efforts to combat migrant smuggling](#)
- [Germany and other EU countries need to catch up on asylum reform, report finds](#)

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.