

# 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 18 May)

- Fighting in Blue Nile state has intensified as the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) seek to retake Kurmuk, a key border town and supply corridor.
- The SAF announced the recapture of Khor Hassan in Blue Nile state from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).
- Protests flared in Abri, Northern State, over daily power outages and deteriorating basic services, with demonstrators blocking the Dongola-Wadi Halfa highway to halt commercial freight while allowing passenger traffic to pass.
- Defected RSF commander Ali Rizqallah "Al-Savana" announced on 16 May that he had joined the SAF and would fight alongside it in Kordofan and Darfur to drive out the RSF.
- Rizqallah stated that RSF is presently controlled by foreign parties, with RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), being under threat of assassination if he deviates from their directives, while other RSF senior officials were liquidated or put under house arrest to advance specific agendas.
- Rizqallah further stated that thousands of civilians and military personnel are detained in Digras prison in Nyala, South Darfur, under poor health conditions and with systematic liquidations taking place.

## Situation in Ethiopia (per 18 May)

- 50 Abinet students were abducted and abused, with their school burned down in Raya Alamata. Local reports link the attack to members of the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), while the mayor of Raya Alamata described the incident as a personal dispute under investigation.
- The Coalition for Ethiopian Unity (CEU) has launched campaign rallies in Addis Ababa on 16 May, contesting Ethiopia's upcoming general elections in June.
- The Lemkin Institute warns that Amhara communities in Ethiopia face an ongoing, systematic campaign of alleged genocidal violence by state and allied forces, marked by widespread abuses, impunity, and escalating conflict, and calls for urgent international accountability and intervention.

## Situation in South Sudan (per 18 May)

- South Sudanese President Salva Kiir has accused former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Arab leaders of trying to influence the 2011 independence referendum, alleging he rejected a \$505 million offer to preserve Sudan's unity.

## International and Regional situation (per 18 May)

- A pro-forma hearing in the court case of alleged Eritrean human smuggler Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam (Kidane) was heard in the court in Zwolle, the Netherlands, today.
- Kidane attended the hearing in person, accompanied by his lawyers.

- New judges have been assigned to oversee the court case. The presiding judge asked the accused about his identity which was confirmed.
- The public prosecutor informed that interviews with the suspect have been suspended temporarily, as the defense lawyers want to consult with their client.
- The prosecutor further informed that there might be some changes and further details introduced to the indictment.
- The defense is due to deliver their request for further investigation to the public prosecutor before 4 September.
- The next pro-forma hearings are scheduled for 4 August at 11am, and 28 October at 9.30am.
- Kenya's transport sector has launched a nationwide strike over rising fuel prices, halting most public and cargo services and resulting in violent clashes between protestors and police, with reports of looting, vandalism, gunshots and the use of teargas.
- Negotiations between Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) governments are reportedly taking place about a new "security architecture" without the US.
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's policy related to the war in Sudan is reportedly shifting, seeking political solutions together with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Aligning with this, Saudi Arabia has reportedly backed out of an arms deal with the SAF.
- The Federal Government of Ethiopia reportedly requested the Tigray Interim Regional Administration to facilitate the movement of Ethiopia National Defense Force (ENDF) troops to the border with Eritrea.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reported 246 suspected Ebola cases and 65 deaths in Ituri province, while Uganda confirmed two cases, one of which was an imported case involving a Congolese man who died in Kampala.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW) warns that US, EU and Canadian efforts to restore diplomatic ties with Eritrea risk entrenching decades of alleged abuses and impunity, both domestically and in Tigray, if sanctions are lifted without clear human rights conditions and accountability measures.
- The African Union (AU) has appointed former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to support peace efforts in the Horn of Africa.
- Egypt and Eritrea signed a maritime transport agreement to launch a new shipping route and deepen economic integration, while reaffirming joint positions on Red Sea security and strengthening cooperation on regional stability in the Horn of Africa.
- According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2025 Somalia report, the country made clear progress in governance, economic recovery, peacebuilding, digital identity, climate resilience, and inclusion, but still faces major security and climate challenges.

## Links of interest

[Sudanese army captures key town near Ethiopian border from RSF | Sudan war News | Al Jazeera](#)  
[Sudanese army advances in Blue Nile state deepen displacement crisis | Newsfeed | Al Jazeera](#)  
[Protesters block major Sudan-Egypt highway over power cuts](#)  
[Sudan welcomes U.S. House committee recognition of RSF genocide in Darfur](#)  
[Sudanese defector commander vows to fight Rapid Support Forces in Kordofan and Darfur](#)  
[DW Amharic - Armed forces said to be members of TPLF abduct students and burn homes](#)  
[Active Genocide Alert for Ethiopia - Update 2](#)  
[Coalition for Ethiopian Unity Holds Campaign Rallies in Addis Ababa as Political Parties Continue Election Activities](#)  
[Kiir says he rejected \\$505 million bid to sway referendum - Radio Tamazuj](#)  
[Epidemic of Ebola Disease caused by Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda determined a public health emergency of international concern](#)  
[HRW warns against easing sanctions on Eritrea without accountability](#)  
[AU selects ex-Nigerian president Obasanjo for Horn of Africa peace role](#)  
[Sudanese journalist Durra Gambo deported from Egypt to Doha](#)  
[Egypt, Eritrea sign maritime transport pact, declare Red Sea security exclusive to littoral states](#)  
[Kenya transporters, school bus drivers begin nationwide strike sake of fuel prices](#)  
[UNDP Somalia Annual Report 2025](#)

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