

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.

International and regional situation (per 21 May)

- Kenya's Court of Appeal lifted an order blocking implementation of a medical cooperation framework with the United States (US), allowing a \$1.6 billion health deal to proceed while legal challenges continue.
- The health deal raises concerns among experts over insufficient data protection, potential data breaches, public participation, as well as questions of constitutional compliance.
- Somaliland said it will open an embassy in Jerusalem, while Israel is expected to establish representation in Hargeisa, Somaliland. This announcement comes after Israel officially recognised Somaliland's independence in December 2025.
- Kenya's nationwide transport strike over sharp fuel price hikes has been paused for a week to allow talks between the government and stakeholders after protests left four dead, dozens injured and over 700 arrested.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) accused South Sudan's government of blocking humanitarian access to opposition-controlled areas and claimed all parties are using aid for political and military objectives.
- MSF said attacks on its facilities left around 762,000 people without healthcare, while it treated more than 1,800 violence-related patients in January and February.
- The Council of the European Union (EU) lifted restrictive visa measures imposed on Ethiopia in 2024, citing improved cooperation on readmission, including identification of Ethiopian nationals, emergency travel documents, and return operations.
- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met Sudanese Prime Minister Kamil Idris in Ankara, Türkiye, on Wednesday, discussing bilateral ties, ceasefire efforts, and humanitarian aid.
- The US updated travel advisories due to the Ebola Bundibugyo outbreak, urging Americans not to travel to South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), or Uganda.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 21 May)

- The Office of the President, headed by the leader of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Debretsion Gebremichael, has suspended civil servants' salaries for May and June to centralize the system.
- A directive has been sent to all regional bureaus and administrations, citing budget shortfalls and unequal distribution of salaries.
- Ethiopia's state broadcaster Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) has fired several journalists who demanded higher wages. The situation has raised concerns about media repression ahead of the federal elections.
- Ethiopia's National Electoral Board has asked parliament for an extra budget of 10 billion birr, citing security related costs, potential post-election expenses in contested or unorganized areas, and previous overruns such as a 1.5 billion birr bill from extended voter registration.
- Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) Chief of Staff Berhanu Jula held meetings with officials of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), with Ethiopia pledging to expand its contribution to regional peace and security operations.

Situation in Sudan (per 21 May)

- 28 people were killed and dozens wounded in a drone strike on a crowded market in Ghubaysh, West Kordofan, with Sudanese human rights group Emergency Lawyers accusing the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), while military sources denied targeting civilians and said a drone hit two Rapid Support Forces (RSF) vehicles.
- International support for a new displacement camp east of Dongola is inadequate, said Sudanese Minister of State for Human Resources and Social Welfare, Salima Ishaq, as the Northern State hosts around 47,000 displaced families from Darfur and Kordofan.
- Amnesty International calls for the RSF commander Al-Fatih Abdallah Idris, known as Abu Lulu, to be removed from combat immediately after reports emerged about his return to the battlefield despite war crimes allegations.
- Abu Lulu was reportedly detained in October 2025 after videos showed him executing captives in civilian clothing, but according to a Reuters investigation he returned to combat in Kordofan in March.

Refugee and migration situation (per 21 May)

- The Department of Refugee Service's (DRS) has suspended all document processing for refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya without any communication to refugees and organisations working in support of refugees and asylum seekers.
- More than 2,000 Sudanese citizens returned to Khartoum from Egypt in a 50-bus convoy organised by the Al-Amal Committee, as part of a voluntary repatriation initiative from Egypt. In addition, 166 returnees were brought by flight from Libya to Port Sudan.
- A South African human rights organization has urged Libyan authorities to release arbitrarily detained Sudanese refugees and dismantle trafficking networks, highlighting widespread abuses amid growing international concern over migrant treatment in Libya.
- Kenya's refugee integration plan risks deepening poverty as aid declines and job shortages undermine self-reliance, according to the World Bank Group.
- Egypt has urged the EU for more financial support amid rising economic strain and aid shortfalls related to its growing refugee population, claiming to host more than 10 million migrants, refugees and asylum seekers since the outbreak of the Sudan war.
- Eastern Libyan authorities say they uncovered 120 migrants and refugees held by human traffickers after an Egyptian escapee led them to detention sites south of Benghazi, Libya.
- The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) warned member states it must cut more jobs and implement urgent reforms after forecasting 2026 funding of just over \$3 billion, which is about 15% below 2025, forcing further staff terminations and operational cuts.

Links of interest

- [Court clears Kenya-US \\$200 billion health deal | Daily Nation](#)
- [Somaliland to open embassy in Jerusalem, Israel in Hargeisa: Envoy | News | Al Jazeera](#)
- [Kenya transport strike paused after deadly protests](#)
- [MSF accuses all South Sudan forces of exploiting aid for military objectives | Reuters](#)
- [Council lifts restrictive visa measures concerning Ethiopia - Consilium](#)
- [Türkiye's Erdogan reiterates support for Sudan sovereignty in talks with PM Idris - TRT World](#)
- [U.S Govt discourages citizens' travel to South Sudan over Ebola - Radio Tamazuj](#)
- [News: Tigray pre-war-council elect President suspends May, June salaries amid move to centralize payroll system](#)
- [Ethiopia, EBC : State-Owned Media Fires Journalists ahead of National Election](#)
- [Ethiopia : Election Board Seeking Additional 10 billion birr budget](#)
- [Ethiopia to Further Expand Role in Africa's Peace and Security Efforts: ENDF Chief of Staff](#)
- [Drone strike on a busy market in Sudan kills 28, says rights group | AP News](#)
- [New IDP camp in northern Sudan overwhelmed as international support falls short, minister says](#)
- [Sudan: RSF commander 'Abu Lulu' must be removed from battlefield immediately amid war crimes allegations](#)
- [Over two thousand Sudanese return from Egypt and Libya](#)
- [Human rights group raises alarm over abuse of Sudanese refugees in Libya](#)
- [As Aid Shrinks, Jobs Become Central to Self-reliance for Host Communities and Refugees in Kenya](#)
- [EU pays Egypt billions to manage migration — Cairo says it is not enough](#)
- [Eastern Libyan authorities recover 120 migrants from 'trafficking dens'](#)
- [Exclusive: Cash-strapped UN refugee agency to cut more jobs, even as crises mount](#)

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