

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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International and regional situation (per 9 July)

- The mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea has been extended by the UN Human Rights Council, with 23 countries voting in favour, 17 abstaining and 6 countries being against the mandate.
- Most of the African countries abstained from the vote, with Ethiopia voting in favour while Egypt and Burundi against.
- Supporters, including Eritrean diaspora civil society organisations as well as the EU, argue the Special Rapporteur's mandate remains one of the few reliable ways to document systematic abuses in Eritrea.
- Medical evacuations of wounded people in South Sudan increased by 50%, totaling 266 cases, in the first six months of this year, as renewed fighting restricted access to healthcare, reports the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- Airlift evacuations are largely directed to Juba Military Hospital where surgeries rose by nearly 30%.
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has begun his tour across African countries with a first visit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he urged the African Union to push for a larger role for Africa in global decision-making, including UN Security Council reform and broader representation.

Migration and refugee situation (per 9 July)

- Uganda's minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Sam Engola, seeks diplomatic discussions with Eritrea to understand the reasons for the increasing number of Eritrean asylum seekers arriving in the country. Uganda currently hosts more than 70,000 Eritrean refugees.
- Engola argued that better information will help Uganda improve refugee response policies while continuing to provide protection and manage growing service demands.
- Egypt has been arbitrarily arresting, detaining, and deporting many refugees and asylum seekers from various countries, including Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, with many "losing their residency status because of bureaucratic delays", reports Human Rights Watch (HRW).
- The European People's Party (EPP) is pushing for stricter EU action on irregular migration, arguing that current implementation of the EU migration pact is not enough and calling for further laws to stop people at EU's external borders.
- The EPP also backs controversial return hubs and is positioning for upcoming political pressure and a broader migration debate in the EU.
- Pope Leo urged European leaders to respond to migration with both immediate relief and a broader long term strategy that protects, supports, and integrates migrants and refugees. The Pope made the appeal after his visit to Italian island Lampedusa.
- 36 people, including children and a pregnant woman, have been rescued by the Libyan General Administration for Coastal Security after spotting their inflatable boat stranded offshore near Zawiya, Libya.
- The group was taken to Tripoli to complete required legal steps before being transferred to Libya's migration agency.

Situation in Sudan (per 9 July)

- Fighting around El Obeid in North Kordofan has displaced more than 5,500 children in two weeks, with up to 500,000 civilians being at risk and increasing drone strikes, siege-like conditions, and shrinking humanitarian access, reports Save the Children.
- At least 330 children were killed or injured in Sudan in the first half of 2026 as fighting intensified, with the worst child casualties in Darfur, Kordofan and especially around El Obeid, said UNICEF.
- Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) forces have reportedly retaken strategic border town Kurmuk in southern Blue Nile.
- Geolocated video evidence indicates SAF has reestablished control at key sites in the town's administrative and brigade headquarters compounds after a counteroffensive along the Kurmuk-Damazin road.
- Two drone attacks in Sudan's North Kordofan region killed at least 15 people and wounded others, including an attack on a civilian vehicle traveling to a wedding and a separate strike on a water transport vehicle.
- Cholera is spreading in Sudan, with rising cases and critical capacity shortages reported in North and West Kordofan, mainly around Al-Mazroub and Western Bara.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 9 July)

- Unidentified gunmen carried out an attack targeting two senior archbishops of the Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church at the church patriarchate compound in Axum in the early hours of 8 July, though no one was injured.
- The church issued a statement naming the attack as an attempted assassination specifically targeting His Eminence Abune Aregawi and His Eminence Abune Natnael, adding there has been no immediate response from security officials.
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) expressed concerns about Tigray's forced conscription of youth, most of which are under 18 years old, arguing the region's mandatory draft law lacks constitutional basis and violates international law.
- Tigrayan forces have been forcibly conscripting Tigrayan youth since at least April 2026, using street roundups, house searches, and raids including at gold-mining sites, according to the HRW.
- Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, told the Ethiopian parliament that Tigrayan youth are being forcibly recruited and sent to fight in Sudan's civil war, calling it the most serious challenge facing Tigray.
- PM Abiy presented Ethiopia's performance report and the next fiscal year's budget to the House of Peoples' Representatives on Tuesday. The ruling party as well as the opposition members said the government's reported achievements do not match what citizens experience daily on the ground.
- The sharpest criticism centered on worsening insecurity across multiple regions and a cost of living crisis marked by high inflation, unemployment, housing strain, and governance shortcomings.

Links of interest

[Eritrean Human Rights Mandate Renewed as UN Council Defies Opposition](#)
[South Sudan medical evacuations rise as conflict intensifies: ICRC](#)
[Russian FM Lavrov begins Africa tour with talks in Ethiopia](#)
[Government Seeks Answers Over Growing Influx of Eritrean Refugees](#)
[Egypt: Refugees, Asylum Seekers Arrested, Deported](#)
[EPP wants to turn screws on migration](#)
[Pope Leo calls on Europe to do more for migrants](#)
[Libyan Coast Guard rescues 36 migrants off Zawiya coast](#)
[Sudan: More Than 5,500 Children Displaced by Escalating Violence in El Obeid in Past Two Weeks](#)
[At least 330 children killed or injured in Sudan war in 6 months. UNICEF says](#)
[15 killed, 10 injured in drone attacks in Sudan's North Kordofan](#)
[Sudan Army Captures Kurmuk From Rebel Coalition](#)
[Cholera cases rise in Sudan's Kordofan as MSF deploys to Darfur](#)
[News: Tigray Orthodox Church says archbishops survive assassination attempt in Axum](#)
[Tigray Mandatory Military Conscription Raises Concern as EHRC Says Most Conscripts Are Under 18](#)
[Ethiopia: Tigray Authorities Forcibly Recruiting Civilians](#)
[PM Abiy Ahmed Alleges Tigray Youth Are Being Forcibly Recruited to Fight in Sudan War](#)
[News: In final scrutiny before term ends, MPs confront PM Abiy over peace, inflation, development gaps](#)

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