

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Situation in Sudan (per 17 August)

- Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Sovereignty Council Chair, called for a dialogue inside Sudan claiming to provide legal and political guarantees to enable the talks.
- He pledged to provide protection as temporary procedural immunity and a temporary suspension of criminal proceedings to let participants take part in during the dialogue, adding that opinions and positions expressed by the participants during the dialogue will not be used as grounds for prosecution.
- The African Union (AU) delegation visited Khartoum on Sunday in its first visit since 2021.
- The African Union's Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) has warned against foreign involvement in Sudan, saying it undermines the country's unity and can worsen the conflict. The discussion took place between the AU PSC delegation and al-Burhan, and the Prime Minister Kamil Idris.
- During the talks, AU PSC stressed that any lasting peace depends on Sudanese-led dialogue, national reconciliation, and a comprehensive political settlement. It also urged greater inclusion in the transitional process and progress towards constitutional governance.
- Pregnant women in western Sudan are forced to travel for hours over dangerous terrain to reach the few medical centres that can provide emergency C-sections, often arriving too late, reports the UN sexual and reproductive health agency (UNFPA).
- Critical supplies, including oxytocin to prevent fatal bleeding during child delivery, are running out and healthcare providers can no longer meet demand. The agency urges decentralising maternity care through expanded mobile services and better support for community midwives.
- Attacks on health care have surged this year particularly affecting Sudan with 37% of health facilities being out of service, said the World Health Organisation.
- WHO stresses that the priority should not be just counting attacks but protecting health care and using the evidence to reduce harm and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Worsening hunger in Ed Daein, West Kordofan, where sharply rising grain prices and lost income have pushed some families to eat ambaz, a residue of sesame and groundnut seeds normally used for animal feed.
- Worsening food insecurity is linked to lost livelihoods, farmers' inability to obtain inputs, and families having been weakened by war, while access for aid into West Kordofan is also increasingly difficult due to insecurity and seasonal road closures.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 17 August)

- Residents across the Oromia region say civilians are forcibly conscripted for the army and in some instances money is demanded for their release.
- A case from East Hararghe Zone states describes an abduction of a young man while he was travelling. After the abduction his family received a call claiming he was conscripted for the army but he could be released if a ransom of 500,000 Ethiopian birr is paid.

- Five Ethiopian journalists that have been detained since 2023 and held for years without trial and are now being pressured to sign apology letters as a condition for their release, reports the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).
- The lawyer of detained journalists argues the letters are self-incriminating and that officials have threatened and isolated them to force compliance. CPJ is calling for the charges to be withdrawn, the journalists to be released, and their cases to be resolved through proper legal processes.
- Compliance with Ethiopia's health institution standards has fallen sharply, with more than 82% of the evaluated health facilities failing to meet requirements and only a small share of government primary health centres fully compliant, states a new government survey, covering 2,701 institutions.
- The survey also points to weaknesses in key clinical and service areas, including limited availability of specialist services such as cardiac, neurology, oncology, renal care, and nuclear medicine, alongside poor results for many private facilities.
- Ethiopia's National Dialogue Conference is progressing on schedule, with most delegate groups already reaching agreement on their recommendations and beginning to finalise their sign-offs, said Hirut Gebre Sellasie, Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.
- The commission has set up a team to harmonise and consolidate proposals from all eight groups into a single unified package.
- Ethiopia's push to centralise authority amid ethnic tensions and armed insurgencies undermined democratic institutions and weakened respect for human rights, with the country still shaped by the lingering impacts of conflict, states the EU's 2025 Report on Human Rights and Democracy.

International and regional situation (per 17 August)

- Heavy fighting started in Baidoa, Somalia, with Somali federal forces clashing with forces loyal to former South West State president Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen. The fighting erupted on Monday morning causing casualties among armed forces as well as civilians.
- There are competing claims from the two warring sides describing attacks involving heavy weapons, alleged civilian deaths, and control attempts over key parts of the city, while communications disruptions and unclear casualty figures add to the uncertainty.
- Egypt has warned that Ethiopia's plans to further control flows of the river Nile to downstream states would violate international law.
- The warning follows statements by Ethiopia's water and energy minister that the country could build additional dams to regulate the river, which Egypt argues amount to unilateral action.
- South Sudan's Interior Minister, Aleu Ayieny Aleu, has accused politicians from Warrap State of smuggling guns into rural areas under the pretext of protecting cattle, but said the weapons are later used to drive communal violence nationwide.

Links of interest

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[Women demand inclusive, safe dialogue to end Sudan war for good](#)
[African Union envoys hold first post-coup talks in Sudan](#)
[African Union rejects foreign interference, parallel governments in Sudan](#)
[Sudan: The harrowing reality of giving birth in a war zone](#)
[37% of health facilities in Sudan out of service in 2026: WHO](#)
['Unbearable hardship' in Sudan — Displaced people in Kordofan eat animal feed to avert starvation](#)
[Analysis: Forced conscription resurfaces across Oromia as Ethiopia continues to grapple with security crises](#)
[In Ethiopia, 5 journalists pressured to apologize for terrorism to win release](#)
[Less than 1 in Five Health Institutions Meet National Standards: Survey](#)
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