

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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Migration and refugee situation (per 21 August)

- Liberia has agreed to take 1,200 third-country deportees from the US, including nationals from Africa, North America, South America and the Caribbean. The deportees will be received within a year, with the first 20 expected this week.
- A US federal judge has allowed the President's Trump administration to end Temporary Protected Status for about 5,000 Ethiopians, removing their temporary right to work and protection from deportation.
- An estimated 50,600 Ethiopians left the country via the Eastern Route in the first quarter of 2026, IOM reported, down from 65,200 in the first quarter of 2025. Migration through Somalia to Bossaso nearly tripled to 18,600 movements.
- The dominant driver of migration cited among Ethiopians was economic pressure, with Amhara and Tigray each accounting for 35 percent of recorded departures.
- Ethiopian nationals made up 91% of the 13,687 migrants who arrived in Yemen in July 2026, the largest single nationality recorded entering the country that month, underscoring Ethiopia's continued dominance of Eastern Route migration flows toward the Gulf.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 21 August)

- A drone strike was reported in Dandera locality in Enderta wereda, near Mekelle, on 18 August, killing one person and injuring another.
- Two additional drone strikes, and one airstrike, launched by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) hit Mekelle on 20 August. The drone strikes targeted the Serawat and Daero localities, while the airstrike hit the Air Force in Quiha.
- The Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM) has unified Shewa, Wollo, Gonder and Wollega (Oromia) factions under a single command, while undertaking discussions with other armed groups, toward a coordinated push against the Ethiopian government, according to Fano chairman Zemene Kassie.
- The birr has fallen to a record low of nearly 162/USD, down 3.2% this year, despite the National Bank of Ethiopia spending roughly \$2.2 billion in 2026 to support it.

Situation in Sudan (per 21 August)

- Fighters of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) attacked the North Kordofan villages of Um Dareisa and Al-Shaqila on 19 August, killing six civilians and forcing over 1,000 people to flee to El Obeid.
- The RSF has been accused of widespread abuses against villagers in the area around El Obeid in recent days, including unlawful killing, sexual and physical abuse, and forced displacement.
- The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) retook full control of Kauda, South Kordofan, between 18 and 19 August after two days of fighting to suppress a mutiny by local Otoro clan fighters over land disputes.
- More than 5,000 people fled Geissan, Blue Nile state, to Ed Damazin after an RSF-SPLM-N alliance seized the town from the SAF last week. Seasonal rains and flooding have compounded shortages of food, medicine and shelter for the displaced.

- RSF forces launched their largest security crackdown in Nyala, South Darfur, deploying checkpoints and armoured vehicles to curb armed robberies, kidnappings and unregistered combat vehicles.
- Over 200,000 people have been newly displaced in Kordofan since late 2025, according to UN's IOM, with drone strikes on El Obeid's power transformer cutting water and hospital services; Blue Nile saw 78,000 newly displaced and West Darfur 18,000 in early August alone.
- An RSF unit of 318 fighters, including four commanders, defected and arrived with up to 50 vehicles in Al-Dabba, Northern State, on 19 August, citing the RSF's lack of internal structure.
- The unit was led by Brigadier General Musa Khamiseen, who has been accused of summary executions and abuses against civilians during the siege of El Fasher.
- The SAF announced on 20 August that it had completed the first phase of processing RSF defectors. Defectors are undergoing security vetting before assignment to army units under amnesty pledges granted by SAF's military chief, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.
- Sudan's health ministry reported over 13,000 HIV cases and tens of thousands of hepatitis infections through 2025 and 2026, alongside ongoing cholera outbreaks in West and North Kordofan and dengue in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.
- The leader of Sudan's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Gibril Ibrahim, said that his group is ready to fully integrate its fighters into the SAF under the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement before the war ends.

International and regional situation (per 21 August)

- A Sudanese delegation visited Kuwait from 19 August, delivering a letter from SAF chief al-Burhan and seeking development financing and cross-border banking support.
- Ethiopia declared Italian ambassador Sem Fabrizi persona non grata on 18 August, after only 10 months in the office, for reportedly following efforts to tighten embassy oversight and prevent alleged abuses involving imports of illegal goods, including weapons, and visa processing.
- The imported goods were allegedly reaching close circles of Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed.
- Italy accepted the decision without publicly explaining its response, while Ethiopia's ambassador remained in Rome, prompting questions about the lack of reciprocal action.
- A federal judge in Washington denied the Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle's summary judgment bid on trespass claims against 13 activists who breached barriers at its 2023 Tacoma festival, ruling its city permit didn't confer exclusive possession of the street or ownership of vendors' damaged property.
- South Sudanese President Salva Kiir's office said that Juba would resist external "directives" on elections, judicial proceedings (including Vice President Riek Machar's trial), and security-sector reform, insisting political decisions belong to South Sudanese institutions.

Links of interest

[Liberia agrees to take 1,200 third-country deportees from the US](#)
[Trump administration can target Ethiopians for deportation](#)
[News: 50,600 Ethiopians left country in first quarter of 2026 amid economic hardship, migrant exploitation](#)
[News: Drone strikes in two locations in Mekelle, 13 casualties received at Ayder Hospital](#)
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[News Analysis: Fano leader says armed groups have formed coalition to work toward 'fall of Abiy Ahmed'](#)
[News: Ethiopia's birr hits record low despite billions spent to support currency](#)
[Sudan paramilitary attacks displace hundreds near El Obeid, sources say](#)
[SPLM-N Hilu retakes full control of Kauda after clashes with Otoro fighters](#)
[Fresh RSF defection to Sudanese army sparks outrage over Darfur war crimes](#)
[More than 5,000 flee south-east Sudan clashes for Ed Damazin, medics say](#)
[Sudan's RSF launches major security crackdown in Nyala](#)
[Sudan clashes displace nearly 10,000 in North Kordofan and Blue Nile, UN warns](#)
[Over 200,000 people newly displaced in Sudan's Kordofan as fighting rages](#)
[Sudan war: 318 RSF fighters defect to army in latest blow to paramilitary](#)
[Sudan army completes first phase of integrating RSF defectors](#)
[Sudan health ministry reports over 13,000 HIV cases, rising disease outbreaks amid war](#)
[Sudan's JEM rebels ready to merge forces into army before war ends, leader says](#)
[Sudan seeks Kuwait economic support as war-battered economy deepens crisis](#)
["Persona non grata": L'Etiopia caccia l'ambasciatore italiano e Roma non reagisce](#)
[Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle v. Gebrekidan et al, No. 3:2024cv05517 - Document 233 \(W.D. Wash. 2026\)](#)
[Kiir warns against foreign pressure on South Sudan](#)

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