

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.

Migration and refugee situation (per 3 September)

- Ministers of Denmark, Austria, The Netherlands, Germany and Greece are scheduled to meet on 4 September to advance plans on establishing “return hubs” in the third countries aimed at sending rejected asylum seekers to be awaiting their deportation or be further processed outside Europe.
- Rwanda and Uganda have emerged as the leading possible host countries, although neither arrangement has been finalised.
- Amnesty International has condemned plans by five EU countries to establish “return hubs” in countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, warning that they could facilitate detention, torture and unlawful deportations.
- Amnesty argues that the proposals would allow Europe to evade its responsibilities by transferring asylum duties to less wealthy countries with serious human rights problems.
- Officials from 5 interested EU countries visited Rwanda last week to negotiate the deal further with hope to open the facilities by the end of the year. Rwanda’s foreign minister Olivier Nduhungirehe confirmed that discussions are continuing, with a transit facility near Kigali among the possible sites.
- The budget of the UNHCR will further drop by 16% in 2027 reaching \$7.14 billion which is the lowest budget in 10 years, reflecting severe funding pressures despite an expected rise in global displacement to more than 130 million people.
- Police are investigating suspected arson at a vacant building in Valkenswaard, The Netherlands, that has been approved as a reception centre for 40 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.
- The premises showed broken windows, heavy soot and signs of attempted fires in two locations, although the timing and precise circumstances remain unclear.
- Somalia was hosting 23,645 Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers by the end of July 2026, making it the third-largest host among Ethiopia’s neighbouring countries.
- Ethiopians represented about 71% of Somalia’s total refugee and asylum-seeker population, largely because of the countries’ shared border and longstanding cross-border movement.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 3 September)

- More than 15,000 ethnic Amhara people have reportedly been forced to leave their homes in East Wollega Zone, Oromia Region, with hundreds killed and villages destroyed during attacks attributed to Oromia Special Forces and allied militias.
- Thousands of displaced families are stranded in a forest in Gida Ayana District without food, water, shelter or medical care, while blocked roads prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching them.
- MIDROC Gold has partnered with Austria’s CEMTEC to supply and install equipment for a planned processing plant in Ethiopia’s Metekel Zone, Benishangul-Gumuz, designed to handle 1.25 million tonnes of gold-bearing ore each year.
- The facility, expected to be equipped within a year, follows extensive exploration in an area where MIDROC previously reported a gold discovery. Environmental and health concerns linked to MIDROC’s earlier operations are raising questions over the company’s regulatory compliance and accountability.

- Ethiopia's Koysha Hydroelectric Project in the South West Ethiopia Peoples' Region is 77% complete but needs an additional investment of €500 million, with completion delayed until 2027 and full electricity production expected by 2029. The project has been under construction since 2016.
- Ethiopia has agreed to double its annual contribution to the African Union to \$15 million, joining the bloc's highest-paying members for the 2027–2029 assessment period cycle.
- The announcement comes as the AU faces serious funding problems, including unpaid national contributions, heavy reliance on foreign donors and reduced external support.
- A severe drought in Wajirat, Tigray, has caused repeated crop failures, depleted food reserves and fodder shortages, placing both residents and livestock at serious risk of hunger and illness. The crisis is affecting much of the Southeastern Zone of the region.

Situation in Sudan (per 3 September)

- An air strike destroyed two clearly marked World Food Programme (WFP) trucks on 30 August, carrying 50 metric tonnes of food to support 5,800 people for a month in South Kordofan. WFP strongly condemned the attack and called on all parties to uphold international law.
- Sudan's authorities have approved legal protections for people taking part in a national dialogue announced by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Chair of the Sovereignty Council, earlier in August.
- The protection includes suspension of criminal proceedings of persons who are participating in the dialogue and preventing prosecution for political views expressed during discussions.
- A worsening cholera outbreak is driving further displacement in Sudan, while humanitarian agencies struggle to respond because the UN's \$2.9 billion appeal is only 41% funded. More than 2,600 cholera cases have been reported at the beginning of August, with broader Kordofan identified as the epicentre.
- Darfur's goldfields have become the foundation of a large wartime smuggling economy controlled largely by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Gold is moved via guarded desert convoys into Chad and the Central African Republic, avoiding official controls and relying on temporary, mobile transit camps.

International and regional situation (per 3 September)

- Heavy fighting broke out in Baidoa, Somalia, between Somali federal troops and forces supporting former South West State President Abdiiaziz Laftagareen, today 3 September.
- Laftagareen's supporters said they were attempting to seize the city, while reports indicated that clashes affected several neighbourhoods, disrupted electricity and caused fires near residential areas.
- The confrontation follows months of political tension after federal forces entered Baidoa and Sheikh Aden Madobe became state president, a decision Laftagareen rejected.
- El Niño could expose more than 162 million children across Eastern and Southern Africa to high risk from climate-related shocks, including flooding, drought, extreme heat, disease, hunger and disrupted education, warned UNICEF.

Links of interest

[Denmark to host talks to push failed deportation centres abroad – again](#)
[EU: 'Return hub' plans in Rwanda and Uganda risk becoming 'cruel black holes' for human rights](#)
[EU delegates visit Rwanda to discuss building return hubs](#)
[Europe's obsession with return hubs may not live up to the hype](#)
[UN refugee agency scales back posts and budget for 2027, documents show](#)
[Arson suspected at future asylum center for 40 minors in Valkenswaard](#)
[Somalia hosts 23,645 Ethiopians as refugee crisis deepens across Horn of Africa](#)
[Thousands of Ethnic Amharas Displaced and Trapped in Wollega Forests Facing Severe Starvation](#)
[News: MIDROC Gold strikes deal for machinery to build 1.25-million-ton annual processing plant in Metekel](#)
[Koysha Dam Needs €500M to Finish as GERD Supplies 52% of Ethiopia's Power](#)
[Ethiopia Doubles AU Budget Contribution as Bloc's Financial Struggles Continue](#)
[Sudan: Air attack destroys food aid for families in South Kordofan](#)
[Sudan Grants Legal Immunity for National Dialogue](#)
[Cholera and displacement surge across Sudan amid deep aid shortfall, UN says](#)
[Darfur gold flows fuel Sudan war economy through regional smuggling routes](#)
[Fighting erupts in Baidoa as Laftagareen forces attack federal troops](#)
[UNICEF sounds El Niño alarm as 162 million children face climate risks](#)

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