

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 organizations, civil society, and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and across Africa. The situation reports can be found [here](#).

News Highlights: WFP suspends aid to Dessie and Kombolcha, Refugees protest in Libya, Increasing 'digital deterrents' for migrants in EU

In this week news highlights: WFP halts food aid to Dessie and Kombolcha amidst looting; Experts warn over potential consequences of lack of action in Ethiopia; Feltman to visit UAE, Egypt, Turkey; UNHCR and Ethiopia issue joint call for more refugee support; Large-scale displacements in Darfur due to conflict; Timeline of events in Sudan; World faces record journalist imprisonment and the Horn is part of it; Protest by refugees outside the UNHCR office erupts into violence; Four year old refugee girl missing at Polish border; Refugees stranded and suffering on Lesbos; Cases of violence against migrants and refugees to be investigated in Croatia; New sanctions on Belarus in response to violations of human rights; UK parliament debating on 'anti-refugee' bill; Irregular migrants to face digital deterrence; Asylum seekers turning 18 years old will be sent back by UK; Oxfam calls for equal access to COVID-19 vaccines for refugees everywhere.

Great Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: UN halts food aid to Dessie and Kombolcha amidst looting

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) stated that it has suspended the distribution of food aid from warehouses in Dessie and Kombolcha, as its staff was held at gunpoint and warehouses were looted. Spokesperson for WFP Stephane Dujarric stated that the looting was done "reportedly by elements of the Tigrayan forces and some members of the local population." The spokesperson also stated that three military trucks were commandeered by military personnel. The spokesperson asked all parties in the conflict to respect humanitarian aid and workers. Earlier this week, it was reported that Dessie and Kombolcha had been recaptured by the Ethiopian forces from the Tigrayan forces.

- [UN halts food aid in Ethiopia's Kombolcha, Dessie after looting](#)
- [U.N. suspends food distribution in two towns in Ethiopia after looting](#)
- [Ethiopian forces recapture two key towns from Tigrayan forces](#)

Ethiopia: Lack of action may lead to further atrocities, experts warn

Human Rights Watch expert Laetitia Bader warns that a lack of action by international bodies may lead to further atrocities being committed in Ethiopia. “[I]nternational bodies still seem unwilling to take concrete measures to press warring parties to prevent further atrocities,” states Bader. Citing the massacre in Aksum committed mostly by Eritrean soldiers, which led to hundreds of deaths among Tigrayans, Bader states that atrocities have so far met with an insufficient response. Meanwhile, the World Peace Foundation stated in 9 December, the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, that it “would be the right day for the United States to make public what it knows about what crimes committed in Ethiopia over the last year may constitute genocide, and who is responsible,” and urged other parties such as the UN Security Council to stand against genocide. Ethnic atrocities have been a part of the conflict in Ethiopia from the start, and may spread even further, analysts warn, and hate speech is fuelling the tensions.

- [How international bodies can help prevent more Ethiopia massacres](#)
- [Don't Be Afraid to Stand Against Genocide](#)
- [Ethiopia's Tigray conflict threatens to break country apart](#)

Ethiopia: Feltman to visit UAE, Turkey and Egypt

United States Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, has departed for the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Egypt to discuss diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Ethiopia.

- [U.S. envoy to visit UAE, Turkey, Egypt to discuss Ethiopia conflict -State Dept](#)

Ethiopia: UNHCR and Ethiopia call the international community to support refugees in Ethiopia

The UN Refugee Agency and the Ethiopian government's Refugees and Returnees Service call for greater support from the international community to over 900,000 refugees currently hosted in Ethiopia. Refugees and Returnees Service Director-General Tesfahun Gobzay said that international efforts to support Ethiopia in providing refugees with necessary resources are decreasing year after year. UNHCR Representative Mamadou Dian Balde stressed that UN agencies and partners should work together to help Ethiopia's government as promised in 2019 and added that “[r]efugees need support, the government needs support. The government has made a very important commitment and I think support is coming. Support is being realized”.

- [UNHCR, Ethiopia Call for More Support to over 900,000 Refugees in Ethiopia](#)

Sudan: Timeline of the recent struggle against the military coup

A video report by The Guardian illustrates the timeline of the protests against the military coup that took place on 25 October. The video sets the event in the context of Sudan's struggle to come to a democracy, led by the civilian protesters.

- [Sudan's deadly military coup: will the fight for democracy ever be won? – video explainer](#)

Sudan: Thousands displaced by conflict in Darfur

The continued conflict in Darfur is causing the displacement of thousands of people. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reports that from January to October this year more than 430,000 people have been displaced due to conflict in Sudan, with Darfur being the most impacted area. In addition, the NRC notes that Sudan hosts more than a million refugees from South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other countries. Sudan represents one of the countries most in need of humanitarian assistance, as the NRC notes that only 15% of the budget for this year's protective response has been allocated in the country, as persistent bureaucratic hurdles are hampering humanitarian help distribution, notably the delivery of relief supplies and aid staff.

- [Sudan: Continued conflict in Darfur causes massive displacements](#)

Horn of Africa: Journalists imprisoned at a record high, also many in the Horn

A list published by the Committee to Protect Journalists revealed that the number of journalists locked up globally is at a record high. At least 293 journalists have been imprisoned and 24 have been killed this year. Among them are 16 Eritrean journalists who have been imprisoned without trial since 2001 or after. 9 journalists are held in Ethiopia, most of them arrested this year. Two are held in Somalia.

- [CJP data](#)
- [Number of journalists in jail around the world at new high, says survey](#)

North Africa

Libya: Migrant and refugee protest outside UNHCR office erupts into violence

Hundreds of migrants and refugees have been camping for the past two months outside of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Center asking for faster evacuation from Libya to allow them resettle in a third country since most of them are refugees and asylum seekers, according to InfoMigrants. Their living conditions have worsened amidst the winter cold, and the refugees state that no solutions have been offered by UNHCR. Violence broke out, as the refugees state that police came to put out a fire they had lit for warmth, but violently arrested some persons in the process, some refugees told InfoMigrants. UNHCR, on the other hand, states that refugees were throwing stones at the police.

- [Libya: Violence erupts outside UNHCR center where hundreds of migrants are protesting](#)

Europe

France/EU: President Macron announces a new partnership with Africa

In a speech outlining the French agenda-setting priorities for its presidency of the Council of the EU, President Macron said that a European Union - African Union summit will be organised in Brussels in February. Macron said that relations with Africa are a priority, and that the relationship needs restructuring. He called for a new joint agenda with Africa, aimed at creating opportunities, peace, and security, based on four concrete pillars. Macron added that these pillars had been agreed in joint discussions with African counterparts. The first pillar is an economic "New Deal" aimed at financing African needs up to 300 billion euros. The second is an agenda to help Africa meet its challenges in the fields of education, health, and climate change. The third pillar is an increased security cooperation with Africa. This entails stronger cooperation to fight terrorism, and creating a security agenda between Europe (as a bloc, rather than individual member states) and Africa. The last pillar is one of movement. Macron said fighting human trafficking would become a priority, while also facilitating movements on cultural and scientific exchange.

- [Présentation de la Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne.](#)

Greece: Thousands of refugees stranded in dire conditions

Over 2,000 migrants and refugees are living in alarming conditions in inadequate facilities in Lesbos, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported. The group, of which one-third is underage, is residing in Kara Tepe camp since they were

relocated after the Moria refugee camp burnt MSF explained. The camp is described by MSF as similar to a prison, due to the fences surrounding the area and the control by security bodies. The hygiene services are scarce and there is no hot water in the showers. The MSF chief on Lesbos Augusto Cezar Meneguim said that “[p]olicies of containment endanger the health of people, forcing them to live in a condition that is comparable to imprisonment, with devastating consequences” and added that [t]heir suffering is the result of the obsession of the EU and Greece of stopping migration at all cost, and it is completely avoidable. The time has come for European leaders to think about protecting and assisting people in need, instead of blocking them, dissuading them and sending them back to where they came from”. Meanwhile, the Greek government stated that the ESTIA refugee housing program scheme, which provides accommodations to asylum seekers and refugees in Greece and is funded by the European Union (EU), has increased its capacity to 23,253 individuals. By the end of November 2021, 14,435 persons had been sheltered in the program, including 2,451 recognized refugees, with children accounting for 44% of the beneficiaries, ANSA notes.

- [2,200 migrants still suffering on Lesbos – MSF](#)
- [Greek government housing program making a difference](#)

Croatia: The Council of Europe request Croatia to investigate cases of violence against migrants and refugees

Slovenian police reported finding the body of a Bangladeshi national near the border with Croatia. Meanwhile, the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) asked the Croatian government to investigate cases of alleged violence against migrants and refugees in Zagreb. The request comes after the representatives of the CPT visited the area and issued a report collecting testimonies from migrants and refugees from both sides of the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The report exposes Croatian police mistreatment of individuals including punches, slaps in the face, kicks to the ground, and various beatings employing batons and other items, InfoMigrants explains. The Zagreb administration recognized that some of the measures utilized by border police included “some form of force”, InfoMigrants notes. In October 2021, the Zagreb administration acknowledged illegal pushbacks of migrants and refugees, therefore denying them their right to protection under the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, InfoMigrants reports.

- [Slovenia police say man from Bangladesh found dead on border](#)
- [Council of Europe accuses Croatia of continued violence against migrants](#)

Belarus/Poland: New sanctions against Belarus in response of violation of human rights at the border

The European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK), United States (US) and Canada issued joint sanctions against Belarusian government in response to “continuing attacks on human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus, disregard for international norms and repeated acts of repression” over violations at the border. The new sanction targets 17 people and 11 companies or institutions, including police officers responsible for border control, state airline Belavia and Syrian airline Cham Wings, media figures and judges. Belarus responded to the sanction stating that they are “difficult to understand” and that they will impact ordinary Belarusians. Meanwhile, Polish authorities said they found another body in the border area with Belarus.

- [EU, UK, US, Canda issue coordinate sanctions against Belarus regime](#)
- [Official Journal of the European Union, December 2, 2021](#)
- [Poland says another migrant found dead near Belarus border](#)

Poland: Four year-old refugee girl missing

When crossing into Europe from Belarus, Iraqi parents lost their four year-old daughter on Monday night this week when they were pushed to Belarus by border guards. Activists and residents organised their own search to help the refugee parents find their four year old daughter Eileen in the cold temperatures that have sunk to a low as -15

degrees Celsius. The search has been going on for days. Since the border is restricted to people who live there, it has made the chances of finding the girl alive to be failing by the hour. Marysia Zlonkiewicz, an activist with Grupa Grancia, stated, "it is Inhumane. A child is missing, it's -12 degrees celsius and people who are ready to search for Eileen are not allowed to operate in the area where she most likely can be found".

- [Poland: Concerns grow for missing four-year-old refugee girl](#)

UK: UK Parliament debate 'anti-refugee' bill

The parliament of the United Kingdom (UK) debated a controversial bill which has been deemed 'anti-refugee'. The bill has to be approved by parliament before it continues to the House of Lords. The aim of a controversial bill, the Nationality and Borders Bill, stated by the Home Secretary Priti Patel, is "to deter illegal entry into the UK" and "break the business model of people smuggling gangs and protecting the lives of those they endanger". Human rights groups point out that the policies are harsh and could even be in breach of international law.

- [UK Parliament to debate controversial 'anti-refugee' bill](#)
- [UK's planned law to stop asylum seekers on boats 'violates basic principles of justice', say Welsh Government ministers](#)

EU: Irregular Migrants crossing over to the EU will face digital deterrents

Europe's efforts in closing off its external borders from having irregular migrants crossing over has progressively caused them to turn to digital technologies, reports the Associated Press. The aim of the digital technologies is to be able to detect the migrants early in advance and dissuade them from crossing the borders. Examples include drones, sound cannons and lie detectors. The new digital wall is being tested on multiple fronts, indicates AP, raising concerns over potentially increased illegal pushbacks. Member of the European Parliament Patrick Breyer has gone to court in order to clarify details on the lie detector program. He points out that even if only for their own benefit, Europeans should care about the deterrence measures, as technologies tested on foreign nationals may later be used against Europeans, too.

- [In post-pandemic Europe, irregular migrants will face digital deterrents](#)

UK: 100 asylum seekers taken in as kids being sent home by the UK

Asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Iraq that were taken in by the United Kingdom (UK) in the last five years as unaccompanied children and given temporary leave to remain in the UK have been sent back home. More than a 100 have been returned, states Mirror. Appeals for extensions of their stay are mostly unsuccessful. Refugee Education UK has followed up with some returnees, indicating that some returnees may be forced to fight against their will when returned. Others struggled to find jobs or had mental health issues.

- [Britain sends more than 100 asylum seekers back home - after taking them in as kids](#)

World

World: Oxfam calls for equitable access to vaccines for everyone and everywhere

Oxfam issued a briefing paper addressing the obstacles that refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and displaced persons are facing in accessing COVID-19 vaccinations. Among others, Oxfam finds administrative and logistical barriers, namely required identity documents, residence permits or insurance certifications, lack of knowledge and concern regarding the vaccine that is often due to linguistic barriers that impede the comprehension of vaccination campaigns to displaced individuals, and gender-based barriers. The report argues that the only solution to fight the pandemic is to ensure to “everyone, everywhere to have equitable and swift access to vaccines”. To do so, Oxfam states that it is firstly necessary to guarantee that low- and middle-income countries have enough vaccine doses for both displaced people and the communities that host them.

- [A People’s Vaccine For Refugees: Ensuring access to COVID-19 vaccines for refugees and other displaced people](#)

* If you have any comments, questions, or additions to the next news highlights, please let us know.

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