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Horn Highlights: Special session in the UN Human Rights Council, Journalist arrested, Fire breaks out in refugee camp

In this week Horn highlights: UN Human Rights Council expected to meet in special session on Ethiopia; Ethiopian journalist arrested and is missing; TDF recaptures UNESCO site of Lalibela; TDF accused of executing civilians; Al Jazeera on the role of drones in the conflict; Fire breaks out in a refugee camp in Sudan.

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: UN Human Rights Council expected to meet on Ethiopia

The United Nations Human Rights Council is expected to host a special session on the war in Ethiopia this week. It comes after the European Union sent a letter to the Human Rights Council. EU Ambassador in Geneva Lotte Knudsen was quoted on Twitter as saying that the Human Rights Council needs to “stand up to its responsibilities”. The EU says that over 50 countries have come out in support of the special session. Knudsen said that “[i]n light of the aggravating situation, we believe the international community has a moral obligation to try to prevent further atrocities and ensure accountability and justice for victims and survivors.”

- [Twitter: Today, over 50 countries have requested to hold a Special Session on the grave situation in Ethiopia.](#)
- [Special UN Rights Council Session On Ethiopia This Week](#)

Ethiopia: Journalist arrested, whereabouts unknown

A journalist, the editor in chief for the Ethiopian outlet Terara Network, Tamrat Negera, was arrested on Friday, states Addis Standard. The network said that the family has been unable to find the journalist at the police station, and that all attempts to locate him had failed. The wife of Tamrat said that he was taken away by men in uniforms, who also confiscated all the media equipment in his residence. The news comes right after the Committee to Protect Journalists said that the biggest setback for media freedom in Africa this year came in Ethiopia. Many journalists have been arrested, with a dozen still in prison.

- [News: Family Of Tamrat Negera Unable To Find His Whereabouts Since Friday](#)
- [Tweet: In sub-Saharan Africa, the biggest setback for media freedom came in Ethiopia](#)

Ethiopia: Tigrayan forces recapture UNESCO site

The Tigrayan Defense Forces (TDF) have been reported to have retaken the religious site of Lalibela, a UNESCO world Heritage site. According to reports, the site was taken back without fighting taking place. The TDF have also captured Gashena, a strategic town in Amhara. Ethiopian government forces, on the other hand, have reportedly continued to make gains in the east, threatening to cut the highway between Mekelle and Woldiya, a major town controlled by the TDF.

- [Witnesses say Tigrayan forces in Ethiopia retook Lalibela, UN Heritage site](#)
- [Twitter: NEW: FBC has confirmed our map updates and states that the ENDF now has secured the Woldiya-Mekelle road.](#)

Ethiopia: Tigrayan forces accused of executions

The Tigrayan Defence Forces (TDF) have been accused of committing massacres in Amhara. According to a Human Rights Watch report, TDF forces summarily executed “dozens of civilians” in the two Amhara towns of Chenna and Kobo. According to the report, TDF forces entered Chenna on the 26th of August, and killed 26 civilians in 15 different incidents. The TDF entered Kobo on 9 September and killed 23 civilians in four separate incidents, says HRW. The report comes after HRW remotely interviewed 36 people. HRW also says that the TDF may have committed the crime of “human shielding”, after using residential compounds holding civilians to shoot at Ethiopian National Defense Force troops. Human Rights Watch is calling on the “United Nations Human Rights Council to establish an international investigative mechanism into abuses by all warring parties in the expanded Tigray conflict.” The US Embassy in Ethiopia responded with concern and urged “authorities to investigate these reports to determine their veracity and to commit to inclusive, transparent processes to hold responsible parties accountable.”

- [Ethiopia: Tigray Forces Summarily Execute Civilians](#)
- [Reports of Human Rights Abuses, Atrocities, and Destruction in Amhara and Afar Regions](#)

Ethiopia: Importance of drones in the conflict

Al Jazeera has written an article on the impact that armed drones might have on the conflict in Ethiopia. In the article, it is pointed out that there are many signs that Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has acquired many cheap drones to complement his air force. There has been evidence that they have acquired drones from three different countries, China, Iran, and Turkey. These drones might have proven very useful in the mountainous regions of Ethiopia, giving a clearer picture of the battlefield to Ethiopian High Command, states Al Jazeera.

- [How armed drones may have helped turn the tide in Ethiopia’s war](#)

Sudan: Fire breaks out in refugee camp

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) stated that a fire broke out at the Umrakuba refugee camp in Sudan, which houses Tigrayan refugees. Threehundred refugees were affected. These refugees are now being accommodated with relatives, until new shelters are built. UNHCR says that the cause of the fire was accidental.

- [Twitter: /3 Fire broke out in Um Rakuba camp on December 10. Refugee volunteers helped evacuate the area. Thankfully there were no fatalities nor injuries. The cause of the fire was accidental.](#)

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

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