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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 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 & Horn Highlights: Airstrikes in Tigray kill civilians and refugees, Violent arrest of refugees in Libya, France presses for EU deal with the UK**

In this week news highlights: This week news highlights: Civilians and refugees in Tigray killed in airstrikes; shortages cause further impediment for aid in Tigray; Airbridge between UAE, Iran, and Ethiopia supplies weapons to the conflict; Escaped Somali recruit claims hundreds died in Eritrean training camps; US Special Envoy to the Horn resigns; Video of the conference of 'Ethiopia at Crossroad' online; Protests continue in Sudan; South Sudanese refugees return home from Ethiopia; Migrants and refugees detained in Tripoli, camp burned; Trafficker burns young Sudanese refugee after not receiving payment; EU pressured to negotiate an asylum and migration treaty with the UK; Asylum seekers from Cuba forcibly expelled to Turkey; Refugee protection needed to fight human trafficking, says Euro-Med; EU council presidencies urged to preserve the right of asylum by UN.

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## **Great Horn of Africa**

### *Ethiopia: Airstrikes kill civilians and refugees in Tigray*

A series of deadly airstrikes targeting civilians and refugees have struck in Tigray. A deadly airstrike in the town of Dedebeit in Tigray has killed at least 56 people; the site was hosting Internally Displaced Persons. In Mai Tsebri, a strike at a flour mill killed at least 17 civilians, including two air workers. The Mai Aini refugee camp, near the southern Tigrayan town of Mai Tsebri, was hit by an airstrike which led to the death of at least three Eritrean refugees, including two children and injured four refugees. Aid agencies told *Reuters* that since October 2021, airstrikes have caused at least 146 deaths in Tigray. The United Nations says that humanitarian aid to the region is severely restricted. The war has had severe adverse effects on the Eritrean refugee population of about 150,000 people in Tigray, who have been targeted by combatants on both sides of the conflict which has led to the refugees being cut off from aid for months at a time. Overall, millions have been displaced and thousands of civilians have been killed in the period of the 14-month-old war in northern Ethiopia between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

- [Air strike in Ethiopia's Tigray kills at least 17, aid workers say](#)
- [Warning over fuel and food stocks as 'hellish' Tigray reels from airstrikes](#)
- [Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: Dozens killed in airstrike at camp, say aid staff](#)
- [UN: Airstrike kills three in Eritrean refugee camp in Ethiopia](#)
- [Two children killed in an airstrike on Tigray refugee camp](#)

*Ethiopia: Severe shortages cause further impediment for aid*

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned about the impact of severe shortages on the delivery of aid, particularly in Tigray, as airstrikes have killed many civilians and refugees over the past weeks. The UN and other aid organizations have responded with outrage to the airstrikes. The main access route for aid is blocked in what the UN refers to as a de-facto blockade, reports *The Guardian*. Of particular concern is the dwindling supply of fuel, without which the aid trucks cannot operate.

- [Guterres calls for end to conflict in Ethiopia after deadly attacks](#)
- [Abiy has 'special responsibility' to end Tigray conflict: Nobel panel](#)
- [Warning over fuel and food stocks as 'hellish' Tigray reels from airstrikes](#)

*Ethiopia: Airbridge between UAE, Iran, and Ethiopia supplies weapons to the conflict*

An article published by *Oryx* has detailed an air bridge set up between the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia which supplies the Ethiopian government with weapons to use in the conflict. The article mentioned that thus far, 140 flights have been documented. The article provides a preliminary list of the known equipment that has been received, which includes drones and munition. Less is known about ground-based weapons, state the authors.

- [Confirmed Arms Transfers To The Ethiopian Military During The Tigray War](#)

*Ethiopia/Somalia: Escaped Somali recruit claims hundreds died in Eritrea*

A Somali recruit who escaped from Eritrea stated to Somali media that over 400 Somali recruits have died in Eritrean training camps. The media report that the recruits number around 5400, and they were sent to Eritrea in 2019 for training, but were held there as Eritrea claimed that Somalia did not pay costs for food, drink, and medicine. The escaped recruit says that thousands have been deployed in the war against Tigray, and many others have been deployed as forced labor. Due to the harsh conditions in the camp, he says that many have died from the disease.

- [Over 400 Missing Somali Recruits Killed in Eritrea, Escapee Says](#)

*Horn of Africa: US Special Envoy resigns*

US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffrey Feltman has resigned last week. His role is taken up by Ambassador David Satterfield. Jeffrey Feltman visited Ethiopia this week, after announcing his resignation, to speak with officials in Addis Ababa. Coinciding with the visit, several prisoners, including Sibhat Nega, a founding member of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and Abay Weldu, a former president of the Tigray region. In addition, several leaders from other ethnic groups were released.

- [Tigray conflict: Ethiopia frees rebel leaders in Christmas amnesty](#)
- [Ethiopia Conflict Dynamics Shift as New U.S. Envoy Takes Over](#)

*Ethiopia/EU: Video of the conference of 'Ethiopia at Crossroad' online*

The full video of the conference on Ethiopia was hosted by two members of the European Parliament, Michele Rivasi and Jan-Christoph Oetjen, in December 2021. The conference showcases discussions on the war in Ethiopia from various sides.

- [Online Conference "Ethiopia at a crossroad" – Monday 6 December 2021](#)

### *Sudan: Protests continue*

Protests against the military coup in Sudan continue, with the latest protest on Thursday 13 January claiming the lives of one protester and one police officer. Dozens more were wounded, as the police used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse the protesters.

- [Sudan security forces fire tear gas at anti-coup protesters](#)

### *South Sudan: South Sudanese refugees return home from Ethiopia*

834 people of whom the majority are women and children coming from a refugee camp in Ethiopia were received in Maban County in Upper Nile state in South Sudan by the local authorities. The refugees returned after their camp was attacked in the conflict. Commissioner Khader said “the returnees from the Yabu’s area were transferred to the county headquarters and sheltered in schools. Some of them live under trees and as a government we provide them with food aid in the form of corn and fish while Human Development Council (HDC) provided non-food aid.”

- [Over 800 South Sudanese Refugees Return from Ethiopia](#)

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## **North Africa**

### *Libya: Migrants and refugees detained, camp burned*

In Tripoli, in front of the community day center, more than 600 migrants and refugees have been detained after a violent crackdown. In December, the center was permanently closed down whereas it used to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees. The Norwegian Refugee Council’s Libya County Director, Dax Rogue, said: “We are alarmed by the detention of hundreds of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, including women and children, that were camped out in front of the former Community Day Centre in Tripoli. Witnesses have told us they were met with violence this morning and that makeshift tents were burnt down. This is the culmination of a disastrous situation that has deteriorated over the last few months.” The Libya authorities are being called upon by humanitarian agencies to immediately release those detained, especially women and children, and to protect them from further violence. The violent arrests of migrants and refugees are the newest incident in a series of renewed violence. “Since the mass detention of thousands of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in October of last year, the situation for this population in Libya has only gotten worse,” stated Rogue.

- [Libya: Hundreds detained in renewed crackdown on migrants and refugees](#)
- [Libyan security forces violently break up a migrant protest](#)
- [Hundreds of asylum seekers detained in a Libyan prison](#)

### *Libya: Trafficker burns young Sudanese refugee after not receiving payment*

*InfoMigrants* reported the story of a young Sudanese refugee who was burned after being held for ransom by a trafficker in Tripoli. The 18-year-old Abdullah from Darfur was held for ransom south of Tripoli. Abdullah and his friend paid in Sudan to cross the border into Libya; they had hoped they would continue their journey to Tripoli and eventually to Europe. In the Libyan city of Sebbah, the south is controlled by a trafficker who kidnapped them because he wanted to extort money from them. He tortured them in order to pressure their families to pay the ransom. However, when the money did not arrive, the trafficker instead opted to use Abdullah to scare other victims. “The smuggler dosed Abdullah with gasoline and set him on fire, to punish him and also to scare everyone else,” explains Hassan Zakaria, who has taken care of Abdullah since his arrival in Tripoli.

- [Libya: Young Sudanese migrant burned with gasoline by smuggler](#)

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## Europe

### *EU/France: EU pressured to negotiate an asylum and migration treaty with the UK*

The French government is pushing for the European Union to act in relation to the channel crossings between the United Kingdom and France, despite the fact that EU member states seem little interested in a migration treaty with the UK. The purpose of this treaty pushed by France, according to a French official cited by *The Guardian*, would be to “open up a legal means of immigration with Great Britain, so people can legally go to Great Britain to seek asylum”. This, however, would also mean that the UK could send back people that were denied asylum. The UK government was refused such an asylum pact during Brexit negotiations. The tensions between France and the UK have increased as a result of an increase in attempts to cross the Channel by migrants and refugees.

- [France to push for EU-wide UK migration treaty over Channel crossings](#)

### *Greece: Asylum seekers from Cuba expelled to Turkey*

In Greece, at least 30 Cubans who were hoping to seek asylum in Europe state they were expelled forcibly to Turkey. Two Cubans that spoke to *Al Jazeera* during an interview told *Al Jazeera* that they were subjected to violence by the police officers and border guards during their expulsion from Greece. The Cubans say they have been left in limbo without identification or access to legal reparations even after some had reported their forced expulsion to the Cuban consulate and Turkish authorities upon their arrival.

- [Cuban asylum seekers in Greece ‘forcibly expelled’ to Turkey](#)

### *UK: Refugee protection needed to fight human trafficking*

The NGO *Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor* warned in a statement that the number of migrant children victimized by human traffickers in the UK is growing. This year, the UK has vowed to tighten its asylum laws, despite the rise indicating that what is needed is more protection, argues Euro-Med. According to official figures about 2,634 migrant children that arrived in the UK in the past four years ended up being victims of human trafficking and the number continues to rise each year. Traffickers are increasingly targeting unaccompanied migrant children that they kidnap upon arrival and this has raised concerns to the EU police agency (Europol). Euro-Med argues that rather than tightening asylum laws, protection should be enhanced to prevent human trafficking, particularly of minors.

- [Fighting human trafficking requires more refugee protection not less: UK](#)

### *EU: EU council presidencies urged to preserve the right of asylum*

The UN Refugee Agency issued a statement warning that in the last year of 2021 at the EU borders, there was the continuation of violent pushbacks of asylum seekers, even as many EU countries indicated their commitment to international human rights and refugee laws and principles. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) highlighted that the European Commission Pact on Migration and Asylum could move the bloc from “an ad hoc crisis-driven approach”. The French and Czech Presidencies of the European Council, in charge in 2022, have been urged by the UNHCR to promote sustainable asylum reform and achieve progress on key issues that include fair and fast asylum procedures, EU solidarity, and reception conditions.

- [UNHCR issues recommendations to the 2022 French and Czech Presidencies of the Council of the EU](#)
- [French, Czech EU presidencies must protect refugees – UNHCR](#)

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

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