

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: Borrell frustrated by lack of EU action on Ethiopia, Libya expels asylum seekers, France/UK coordination of rescues fails

In this week news highlights: New joint report on atrocities in Western Tigray; EU top diplomat says Ethiopia is his biggest frustration, as some member states block decisive action; More journalists arrested in Ethiopia; NYT reports on how Abiy planned the war; UNHCR face funding shortfall in Ethiopia; UN Human Rights Council to meet on Ethiopia; Over 800,000 affected by South Sudan floods; Asylum seeker and refugees forcefully expelled from Libya; 78 migrants rescued by Tunisia navy, one person dead; Refugees calling back and forth between UK and France to ask for rescue; Pregnant refugees not been seen by doctors in the UK; Refugees trapped in a freezing forest without aid between Poland and Belarus; EU proposal could see more border closures in EU; Berlin to accept 500 Afghan refugees in 5 years; Report calls for protection of orphans from human trafficking.

Great Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: Joint report says attacks on civilians in Western Tigray continues

Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have reported a new wave of atrocities committed in Western Tigray after a joint investigation. After interviewing 31 people, they have found that Amhara militias have since the start of November, “systematically rounded up Tigrayans in Adebai, Humera, and Rawyan.” They were then sent to detention camps or expelled to central Tigray. They include children, women and sick people. The report added that “[s]ix witnesses said Amhara forces shot at Tigrayans seeking to flee the roundups in Adebai and attacked them with sticks and sharp objects. An unknown number were killed.” The investigation has also seen satellite imagery, which shows significant activity between 19 November and 5 December. This activity includes what appears to be “moving vehicles, groups of people around a makeshift detention site, large amounts of debris on the main road, and burned structures.” AI and HRW said that the Ethiopian government should “immediately cease attacks on civilians, secure the release of those arbitrarily detained, and urgently provide unimpeded access to Western Tigray”. They added that deliberate attacks on civilians violate the laws of war.

- AI: [Ethiopia: New Wave Of Atrocities In Western Tigray](#)
- HRW: [Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray](#)

Ethiopia/EU: Top diplomat says EU’s response to Ethiopia has been his biggest frustration this year

The European Union’s top diplomat, High Representative Josep Borrell, said that the EU’s response to the conflict in Ethiopia has been one of his biggest frustrations this year. He added that the lack of unanimity between EU member

states has prevented a strong response, and stopped the EU from preventing “mass rapes using sexual violence as a war aim, killings and concentration camps based on ethnic belonging”. According to Borrell, several European countries do not believe that sanctions were the solution and these have thus not yet been imposed. *Euractiv* reports that it understands Germany to be one of the leading countries that is reluctant on sanctions. Borrell added that he personally believes that while sanctions would not have stopped the conflict, they “would have, in my view, influenced the behaviour of the actors.”

- [Failure on Ethiopia sanctions ‘my biggest frustration’ this year, says EU’s top diplomat](#)

Ethiopia: CPJ says 14 journalists arrested since 2 November, including one from AP

Associated Press News has reported that one of its accredited freelance journalists, Amir Aman Kiyaro, has been arrested by Ethiopian security forces on 28 November. According to AP, Amir has not yet been charged and authorities have not responded to AP’s requests for information. Ethiopian State media reported on his arrest, saying that he had been supporting a terrorist group after he interviewed them. One police inspector told state media that the journalist could receive a prison sentence between 7 and 15 years. The *Committee to Protect Journalists* (CPJ) said that 14 journalists have been arrested in Ethiopia since 2 November 2021 when the state of emergency was declared. Some of these arrests were made by men in civilian clothes. The CPJ has accused Ethiopia of using the state of Emergency to intimidate and arrest journalists. According to CPJ information, none of the men arrested have yet appeared in court. Some of the journalist’s whereabouts are still unknown.

- [Freelance journalist accredited to AP detained in Ethiopia](#)
- [Ethiopia uses emergency law to ramp up arrests of journalists](#)

Ethiopia: New York Times article on Prime Minister Abiy and his preparations for war

New York Times journalist Declan Walsh has published an article on how Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed won the Nobel Peace Prize and organized a war at the same time. Although Abiy has insisted that Tigray started the war, “[i]t was war of choice for Mr. Abiy”, states Walsh. Walsh discusses the increasing evidence that Prime Minister Abiy extensively planned the war and deployment of troops ahead of the conflict’s start. He had meetings with the Eritrean dictator President Isaias on troop movements and war with Tigray. Records show that Abiy and Isaias met at least 14 times from the signing of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia for which Abiy received a Nobel Prize to the start of the conflict. These meetings often happened without staff present. Although these 14 meetings were reported in records and news reports, they also met at least three times secretly in 2019 and 2020. The two years after the peace agreements also saw extensive activities by Eritrean authorities who met with Amhara officials, and Eritrean spies. Eritrea later trained 60,000 Amhara Special Forces. One former official said that in Mid-October Abiy told Ethiopian officials that an invasion of Tigray was afoot and would take three to five days.

- [The Nobel Peace Prize That Paved the Way for War](#)

Ethiopia: Needs of refugees, IDPs in Ethiopia not met as UNHCR faces funding shortfall

Only 72 percent of the necessary 164.5 million US dollars to meet the needs of 650,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 96,000 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia as well as 120,000 Ethiopian refugees in eastern Sudan was received by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The money is required to provide shelter, education, healthcare as well as water and sanitation needs of refugees and IDPs in Ethiopia and Ethiopian refugees in Sudan.

- [UNHCR faces funding shortfall to meet needs of refugees, IDPs in Ethiopia](#)

Ethiopia: Human rights situation in Ethiopia to be assessed by the UN Human Rights Council

Today, on Friday 17 December 2021, a special session of the UN Human Rights Council will be held on the grave

human rights situation in Ethiopia. A draft EU resolution will be presented at the meeting on crimes committed in the conflict. Some of the crimes may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

- [European Union requests Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council to assess the grave human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)
- [UN rights forum to hold session on Ethiopia at EU request](#)

South Sudan: Worst flood in 60 years affects over 800,000 people

8 states have been affected by the ongoing floods in South Sudan, which have affected more than 835,000 people. Over 200,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. The United Nations said the flooding has now affected people in 33 of South Sudan's 78 counties. The situation is particularly bad in Jonglei state. The United Nations said the flooding has caused severe hardships in affected communities, as "homes, nutrition and health facilities, water sources, schools and markets are submerged, impacting people's access to essential services, eroding their coping mechanisms and exacerbating vulnerability." In some affected areas, people are reporting they have no access to safe water, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. The floods have displaced thousands of people from their homes as they move to higher grounds. Furthermore, floods have impacted livelihoods and food production, destroying farmland, crops and livestock.

- [South Sudan – Over 800,000 Affected by Worst Flooding in 60 Years](#)

North Africa

Libya: Asylum seekers and refugees forcefully expelled from Libya

The forced expulsion of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants by the Libyan authorities is condemned by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. At least two groups of 18 and 19 Sudanese persons respectively have been transported across the Sudan/Libya border and have been left in the Sahara desert. 24 Eritrean refugees are also at risk of deportation, says the UN. The UN says Libya's expulsion of the Sudanese asylum seekers violates international human rights and refugee laws, especially when done without due process and procedural guarantees. Rupert Colville, a UN spokesperson, said "those expelled have often already survived a range of other serious human rights violations and abuses in Libya at the hands of both state and nonstate actors, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, trafficking, sexual violence, torture and ill-treatment." Authorities are being called to protect the rights of all asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Libya.

- [UN human rights office 'deeply concerned' at Libya migrant expulsions](#)
- [UN Condemns Forced Expulsions of Asylum Seekers from Libya](#)
- [UN raises alarm over 'continuing' expulsions of asylum seekers from Libya](#)

Tunisia: 78 migrants rescued by Tunisian navy

78 people aged 12-45, mostly Bangladeshi and Egyptians, were picked up from the Mediterranean Sea by the Tunisian navy on Wednesday. One person passed away. The group departed just across the Libyan border with Tunisia, headed for Europe, as reported by *France 24*.

- [Tunisia navy rescues 78 migrants, one dead](#)
- [Tunisia's navy rescues 78 migrants](#)

Europe

UK: Refugees crossing to the UK are being redirected to contact the French by UK coastguard

Refugees in small boats crossing the channel to the UK are requesting the UK coastguards to review its procedures after claims that UK officials regularly redirected refugees to French emergency services after making 999 calls in what they believed was the UK part of the channel. Four days before the mass drowning on 24 November, occupants of boats trying to cross from France to the UK said they made repeated calls to French and English coastguards when their boat got into difficulty. "The English told us to phone the French even without asking for our GPS position," said one survivor of the disaster. " We called the French, they asked for our GPS position and told us we were in UK waters. Nobody came to rescue us – neither English nor French. Eventually we called the French emergency services, who came to rescue us and brought us back to Calais."

- [Teen, 7-Year-Old Among Those Killed When Migrant Boat Capsized in English Channel](#)
- [UK coastguard 'telling refugees in British waters to contact the French'](#)

UK: Pregnant refugees not being examined by doctors or midwives in the UK

Pregnant refugees state they have not been fed or examined by doctors or midwives after arriving in the UK. The shadow Northern Ireland secretary and MP for Hove and Portslade wrote to the Home Office to ask for an investigation into the treatment of at least five women at a hotel in his constituency. This month he wrote in a letter: "a community midwife has been into the hotel as there was a pregnant woman who required booking for her antenatal care. On arrival she discovered that the woman was already 38 weeks pregnant and had not been seen by a doctor/GP since arrival in the UK. This woman has primary tokophobia and has a possible breech presentation". The midwife discovered there were four women that required antenatal care and according to the letter, "she was required to attend to these women in a communal area and was unable to assess their other living conditions," Kyle wrote. A health official wrote a letter of complaint reporting that the guards were allegedly withholding food. "Sometimes the pregnant women were only given water," the official claimed.

- [Pregnant refugees not being seen by doctors for weeks after reaching UK](#)

Poland/Belarus: In a forest between Poland and Belarus, trapped refugees beg for help

Refugees trapped in a forest between Poland and Belarus have been pleading "don't let us die like this." With up to 20 people already dead and the temperatures dropping to -11C, fear is that more will die as they try to cross to either side of the border. Volunteers are banned from entering "no man's land" to answer the refugee's call for help. The refugees and migrants are being pursued by the armed Polish militia who have been patrolling the forest.

- [Desperate refugees beg 'don't let us die like this' trapped in freezing forest](#)

EU: Borderless model about to be diminished by EU change proposal

The European Union is proposing adjustments that would chip away at one of the principle aspects of the EU, the unfettered movement inside the EU. If the adjustments are adopted, member states may introduce border checks any time they wish. They would be able to lengthen them nearly indefinitely. Currently, such measures are still only allowed in absolute cases of emergency. Additionally member states will be able to drop some protection for asylum seekers if neighboring international locations orchestrate migration flows to the bloc's borders, as Belarus has been accused of doing in recent months to countries like Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

- [E.U. Proposes Changes That Would Chip Away at Borderless Model](#)

Berlin: 500 Afghan refugees to be accepted into Berlin

Over the next five years 500 refugees from Afghanistan will be taken in by the city government of Berlin. They plan to prioritize the people who are in urgent need of protection, as determined by the UN Refugee Agency, under the initiative. This amounts to absorbing 100 persons annually. The Berlin senate has also decided they will introduce extended family reunification rules for relatives of Afghan refugees that are already living in Berlin.

- [City of Berlin to accept 500 Afghan refugees](#)
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World

World: Action needed to prevent trafficking and exploitation of children in orphanages

An estimated number of 5.4 million children worldwide is said to live in institutions that do not meet their needs and neglect their rights, and are exposed to multiple forms of exploitation and harm, as stated by the International children charity *Lumos*. In their new report, they identified global patterns of institution-related trafficking, while taking into account evidence from 84 organisations in 45 countries around the world. In some instances, “children were left malnourished and held in cramped, unhygienic conditions to attract money from donors and volunteers.” The acting director of evidence, advocacy and campaigns at Lumos, Lina Gyllensten, said: “Lumos’ report shows that institutions are playing a significant role in many instances of child exploitation and abuse around the world. Vulnerable children are being trapped in a complex web of institution- related trafficking and are being repeatedly exposed to multiple forms of harm. It is time to break these cycles of exploitation.”

- [Urgent action needed to halt trafficking of children in world’s orphanages – report](#)
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* If you have any comments, questions, or additions to the next news highlights, please let us know.

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