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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 Highlights: Protesters met with violence in Sudan, Concerns over Ethiopian integrity, UK pushback strategy challenged

In this week news highlights: FAA warns pilots arriving in Addis of potential ground fire; US is worried about integrity of Ethiopia; Ethiopian Rights Commission raises concern about State of Emergency arrests; Chinese drones identified in Ethiopia; Ethiopian ceasefire difficult to achieve; More UN Staff members released by Ethiopia; EHRC Chief Commissioner comments on joint report; 63 refugees brought to Italy from Ethiopian camps through humanitarian corridor; Fifteen killed in Sudan as EU condemns violence against protestors; Sea-Watch 4 threatened with kidnapping by Libyan authorities; Facebook misused by human traffickers to extort money; Increased worry over potential Tunisia-France agreement on migrants repatriation; Moroccan authorities say picked up over 300 individuals at sea; Greece criminalizes aid workers and asylum seekers to deter migration; UK Home Secretary pushback strategy opposed by border force Union; Seven alleged human traffickers arrested in Serbia; Cyprus will present a request for asylum applications suspension; 14-year-old dies at Polish-Belarusian border; and UNHCR says the number of displaced persons worldwide reaches 84 million.

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: FAA warns pilots of potential ground fire

The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is warning pilots arriving at the airport in Addis Ababa that they could be “directly or indirectly exposed to ground weapons fire and/or surface-to-air fire”. This warning comes as there are reports that Tigrayan and OLA forces are approaching the capital.

- [US warns pilots of weapon fire as war nears Ethiopia capital](#)

Ethiopia: US worried about integrity of Ethiopia

While answering questions in Kenya, US Secretary of State Blinken said that the US is deeply concerned about conflict in Ethiopia and the “unity of and integrity of the state.” He added that there would be consequences for the atrocities committed against civilians in the conflict. Blinken however declined to say whether targeting of Tigrayans constituted a genocide. Instead, he said that it would be determined “once we get all the analysis that goes into looking at the facts and looking at the law.”

- [On first Africa trip, Blinken confronts questions of U.S. leverage in deepening crises](#) • [Blinken says fighting in Ethiopia ‘needs to stop.’](#)

Ethiopia: Human Rights Commission says SoE not in compliance with Human Rights

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has said that it has been unable to compile a report on individuals being arrested in Ethiopia. It has also not been able to gather information about it. The Commission does say that most detainees it spoke to say that they believe they have been arrested due to their ethnicity. Many detained have not been able to contact their families. The EHRC also said that it believed the State of Emergency proclamation has “not been implemented in compliance with the human rights principles of “necessity, proportionality, and freedom from discrimination”. The EHRC is calling on the government to release all those detained on the basis of ethnicity.

- [Addis Ababa: The Arrest and Condition of Persons Detained in Connection With the State of Emergency Requires Urgent Attention](#)

Ethiopia: Pax identifies Chinese drones in Ethiopia

Pax for Peace says that it has confirmed Ethiopia is flying Chinese drones. It says that it has identified Chinese Wing Loong drones from Airbus Satellite imagery. *Pax* adds that these drones are likely to have been delivered recently. They have also identified Iranian Mohajer-6 being used by the Ethiopian military. It has not yet seen imagery of the Turkish Bayraktar TB-2 drone being used.

- [Ethiopia now confirmed to fly Chinese armed drones](#)

Ethiopia: In the way of peace?

African Union envoy Obasanjo and US envoy Feltman have returned to Ethiopia to meet with Ethiopian representatives in order to push a ceasefire forward. Negotiations are encountering difficulties as both sides believe that they have a strong chance of winning. One diplomatic official told *The New Humanitarian* that “[t]here is still hope that a [ceasefire] can happen, but no one should count on it.” Another official has said that no tangible agreement has been reached yet. Some Ethiopian ministers have said negotiations could be possible if the Tigrayans withdraw back to Tigrayan borders. Tigrayan forces are unlikely to accept this, as it would mean giving up their military advantage. Meanwhile the Tigrayans want the humanitarian blockade lifted before negotiations can start. Neither side are likely going to give in. William Davison, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, said: “Unless Prime Minister Abiy and his allies are willing to take measures to really facilitate aid to Tigray and restore banking services... we’re just going to see things play out on the battlefield.”

- [Mediators step up Ethiopia ceasefire bid as aid efforts flounder](#)
- [U.S., African Union envoys arrive in Ethiopia to revive truce efforts](#)

Ethiopia: Chief Commissioner of the EHRC comments on report

In an online meeting held by *Deutsche Afrika Stiftung* on 17 November, the Chief Commissioner of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Dr Daniel Bekele talked about the recently published joint report with the UN Human Rights Office. The report covers the abuses committed in Ethiopia from the beginning of the conflict on 3 November 2020 until 28 June 2021. The report finds that all parties involved in the Tigray conflict are responsible for violations of human rights, some of which may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The violations committed according to the report include attacks on civilians, forced displacement, destruction of properties, sexual violence and gender-based violence, and violence against refugees. Participants in the meeting raised the criticism that the report has downplayed the abuses committed by the Ethiopian government, and other criticism, such as the limited access of the investigating team to key sites of abuses. Dr Daniel Bekele denied the critique of Ethiopian bias, claiming that the report focused on all parties involved and remained in line with the abuses observed. He acknowledged that the team would have liked to reach more sites. Dr Bekele considers that an abuse of the state of emergency in the country may be ongoing and expressed concern over the arrests happening in Ethiopia. Answering the comparison made by some between Ethiopia and Rwanda in 1994, Dr Bekele stated that he

does not consider it wrong to be worried about the risk of more atrocities being committed in Ethiopia, but does not feel the comparison holds ground.

- [Online-Discussion: Human rights, transitional justice and the difficult search for a political solution in Ethiopia.](#)

Ethiopia: Government releases 6 UN staff members and drivers

The United Nations has announced that the government has released six more UN staff members, and all 70 UN drivers. Five staff members of the 16 that were detained last week remain in custody.

- [Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General](#)

Ethiopia: 63 refugees reach Italy from Ethiopian refugee camps through humanitarian corridor A group of 63 refugees (mostly Eritrean), among them single mothers with their kids, was transported to Italy from Ethiopia through a humanitarian corridor. The individuals will be hosted in Italy by churches and associations as well as in private households. As noted by *InfoMigrants*, the initiative is the outcome of a Memorandum of Understanding for 600 asylum seekers from Ethiopia, Jordan, and Niger agreed in 2019 by the Italian government, the Community of Sant'Egidio, and the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI).

- [63 refugees from Ethiopian camps brought to Italy via humanitarian corridors](#)

Sudan: Fifteen people killed as opposition calls for escalation

Fifteen more people were killed in protests against the coup in Sudan on Wednesday, after troops fired live rounds into the crowd. Many more were wounded. According to some witnesses, doctors trying to treat those in need were being arrested. In response, opposition leaders have called for an escalation of the violence. A senior member of the opposition told *the Guardian* that “[n]ow we are making consultations among the resistance committees about upping the escalation against the coup.” Although internet is still restricted, partial return of connection has allowed videos of the protests to come out and spread on social media. The Unified Office of Sudanese Doctors called for the international community to intervene to stop the violence against protesters and to start an international investigation of the situation.

- [Sudan pro-democracy activists call for escalation after lethal crackdown](#)
- [Statement United Office of Sudanese Doctors](#)

Sudan: EU condemns violence against protestors and warns of consequences

In a statement made on Thursday, EU High Representative Josep Borell has said that the violence shown against protestors in Sudan “constitute[s] violations of basic human rights such as freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and protection of civilians.” He added that the EU supports the transitional administration and that it will not accept a failure of the transition due to the coup. Borell added that if “constitutional order is not immediately restored there will be serious consequences for our support, including financial.”

- [Sudan: Statement by the High Representative Borrell on the political developments](#)

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North Africa

Libya: Sea-Watch 4 threatened with kidnapping by Libyan authorities

The rescue vessel Sea-Watch 4 was threatened by Libya navy authorities with kidnapping to Libya if they did not immediately leave the area, said Sea Watch International. Sea-Watch 4 declared navigation in international waters more than 40 miles away from Libyan coasts, where innocent passage is allowed by law. Sea-Watch International later stated that the situation stabilized, however it called on the European Union (EU) to end the partnership with the Libyan coast guard “that violently prevents people from fleeing and is not too shy to threaten rescue ships”, Sea Watch International tweeted.

- [Tweet by Sea-Watch International, November 18, 2021](#)

Libya: Human traffickers use Facebook to obtain ransom payments

Human traffickers post pictures of people holding identification numbers to extort money from their families on Facebook groups. A Nigerian cultural mediator explained to *l'Espresso* that migrants and refugees imprisoned are often enabled to contact their families only to ask to pay the ransom for their release. When this does not happen, traffickers resort to publishing their pictures on social media and make them travel around the network. If no one recognizes them or pays for the ransom, they are likely to be killed because they are unprofitable, *l'Espresso* notes.

- [Libia, i trafficanti diffondono sui social le foto dei migranti nei centri di detenzione: 'Perché le famiglie le vedano e paghino i riscatti'](#)

Tunisia/France: Possible repatriation deal violates undocumented migrants' rights

The Tunisian NGO *Forum for Economic and Social Rights* (FTDES) voiced alarm over a possible deal to accelerate the expulsion from France of Tunisian migrants with irregular status. FTDES spokesperson Romdhane Ben Amor said that this decision will prevent irregular migrants from accessing their right to appeal against the expulsion decision. At the end of September, Paris decided to tighten requirements to obtain a visa for nationals from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, as these countries fail to collaborate with France in returning migrants, *ANSA* reports. Romdhane Ben Amor stated that such agreement violates the rights of undocumented migrants and added that "France intends to expel over 3,400 Tunisian migrants in an irregular situation" while "Tunisia continues to be silent on this issue and has not provided so far data or numbers to inform the public opinion on this theme".

- [Tunisia: Fear for acceleration repatriations from France – NGO](#)

Morocco: Over 300 migrants and refugees picked by Moroccan authorities

Moroccan Press agency *MAP* reports Morocco assisted hundreds of migrants and refugees in despair off its coast since Friday. Despite tightened controls, migrant departures from Morocco in the attempt to reach Spain coasts continued, *Arab News* notes. The agency *MAP* stated the individuals were given first assistance aboard navy units and then transferred to the nearest port, where they were turned over to the police for the "standard administrative procedures", *Arab News* reports. Meanwhile, *InfoMigrants* reports that last week at least 10 individuals were found dead at sea after attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea towards Spain.

- [Morocco says hundreds of migrants assisted off coast](#)
- [Morocco rescues 331 migrants over four days](#)

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Europe

Greece: Aid workers and asylum seekers targeted to deter migration

Greece and other European countries threaten criminal action against aid workers and asylum seekers to dissuade migration, reports *InfoMigrants*. An asylum seeker told *InfoMigrants* that he was forced by a smuggler to drive an inflatable dinghy carrying himself and others to Greece. Even though he was forced, he is now detained in prison serving a 12-year sentence. Aid workers and volunteers who assist migrants and refugees in Greece have also been charged with major offences by Greek police, *InfoMigrants* reports. Among them, Sara Mardini, a Syrian human rights activist and a refugee herself, and Sean Binder, an Irish volunteer, were arrested and jailed for months in 2018 on accusations of espionage, money laundering, human trafficking, and other crimes, *InfoMigrants* notes. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), since 2016 Germany, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Spain, and Greece have launched 58 legal processes against organisations engaging in search and rescue operations.

- [Greece: Migrants and aid workers facing decades in prison](#)
- [Trial of aid workers who rescued migrants to start in Lesbos](#)

UK: Home Secretary pushback strategy challenged by Border Force trade union

The UK Border Force expressed concern about Home Secretary Priti Patel's suggested strategy of driving boats back

to France. Border guards would be asked to push back small boats trying to cross the Channel. Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) trade union officials for the border force are considering legal action to prevent the tactic from being implemented. PCS head for Border Force Kevin Mills stated that “PCS is in consultation with its members and a number have raised direct concerns about the pushback tactic – the safety and if it is legal”, *The Guardian* notes. The chief executive of the Refugee Council Enver Solomon said “[t]he union is right to challenge pushbacks as cruel, dangerous and in conflict with international law”. Conservative MPs who met with UK Home Secretary Patel in early September told *The Guardian* about the preparations to drive back boats in the Channel, despite warnings from French officials, trade unions, and refugee organizations that doing so may put lives in danger, *The Guardian* explains. UK Home Secretary Patel declared she would move forward with the pushback tactic after discussing it with the Prime Minister and claiming the strategy to be in line with the law, *The Guardian* notes.

- [Union considers legal action over Channel refugee ‘pushbacks](#)

Serbia: Seven alleged human traffickers arrested in police operation

Seven persons accused of human trafficking have been detained after a police operation last week in Serbia. 991 undocumented migrants and refugees have been transported to detention centres. The Serbian Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin claimed “Serbia will not be a parking lot for migrants” and added that Serbia will not allow the everyday lives of its inhabitants to be jeopardized by trafficking organizations’ illegal operations, *ANSA* notes.

- [Serbia detains 991 migrants, arrests 7 traffickers](#)

Cyprus: Cyprus to suspend asylum applications for those entering the country illegally

Cyprus intends to take steps to reduce irregular migration by suspending asylum applications for those entering the country unlawfully. Government spokesperson Marios Pelekanos said the increase in the arrivals is “a clear policy of instrumentalizing human pain by Turkey” and reported that local authorities worry about “demographic changes”, as neighbourhoods turn into “ghettos” with 30 percent of pre-school children holding a “migrant biography”. Activists and organizations stated that government figures are misleading, *Reuters* reports. Furthermore, migrants have a right to claim asylum under international law.

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- [Cyprus wants asylum right curbed for irregular migrants](#)

Poland/Belarus: Migrant and refugee lives at risk at the border

A 14-year-old child died near the border between Poland and Belarus after being exposed to freezing conditions in the region. Worry for migrants and refugees stranded at the border grows due to frigid temperatures and shortage of essential goods and medical assistance. In an interview reported by *Al Jazeera*, a refugee said they are hungry, unable to sleep and that they “[...] saw people die of hunger, thirst and cold, but I couldn’t do anything. I was now fleeing death”. Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) stated on November 17 that it will open “technical talks” with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Belarus on how to repatriate migrants who attempted to enter Europe through the Polish-Belarusian borders. On the same day, the EU also committed to send 7000,000 euros to the Belarus border in goods of first necessity. Moreover, hundreds of migrants and refugees were transported by Belarus from the Polish border to a neighboring warehouse on November 17, thus getting temporary refuge against the frigid conditions in the region, *Refugee Daily* reports.

- [Teenage boy dies in freezing conditions on Poland-Belarus border](#)
- [‘Please save us’: Refugees face death at Poland-Belarus border](#)
- [Belarus moves migrants from Polish border to warehouse, easing crisis for now](#)
- [EU confirms ‘technical talks’ with Belarus on migrants](#)
- [EU to send aid to migrants at Belarus border](#)

World

World: UNHCR reports an increase in the number of displacements worldwide

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the number of people forced to flee their homes throughout the world grew to more than 84 million in the first half of this year. The UNHCR Head Filippo Grandi stated that “[t]he

international community is failing to prevent violence, persecution, and human rights violations, which continue to drive people from their homes,” and added that “ (...) the effects of climate change are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities in many areas hosting the forcibly displaced”. The UNHCR also reported that the number of individuals categorized as refugees under its mandate was more than 20.8 million halfway through the year.

- [UN says number of displaced people worldwide now tops 84 million](#)

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

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