

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: DPM takes over in Ethiopia as escalation looms, Rights groups ask ICC to investigate Libya, Leaked EU document on arresting smugglers

In this week news highlights: First Humanitarian trucks arrive in Tigray since October; Ethiopia removes Irish diplomats and asks the US to stop spreading fake news; UAE airbridge to Ethiopia; Former NZ PM warns of potential genocide in Ethiopia; UN warns of new wave of displacement in Western Tigray; UN SG calls for immediate ceasefire; Ethiopian government bans reporting on war; Deputy Prime Minister takes over daily tasks in Ethiopia; Protests in Sudan Continue; Normalization between Sudan and Israel raises fear of deportation after coup; 780,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan; Severe drought forces thousands to relocate in Somalia; New law to facilitate refugee integration in Kenya; 75 individuals drowned in the Mediterranean Sea; Rights groups ask the ICC to investigate migrants abuses in Libya as potential crimes against humanity; Europe document detailing strategy for smuggler arrests revealed; More deaths in the English Channel; Four persons suspected of smuggling and torturing migrants in North Macedonia; Over 370 individuals rescued off Canary Islands; Migrants say they were tortured by Polish and Belarusian police; Stop Soros law criminalizing asylum seekers incompatible with EU law; NGOs accuse Greece of detaining migrants illegally; and Asylum seekers rights deteriorated due to COVID-19 lockdown measures.

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: First humanitarian trucks enter Tigray since October

In its most recent report, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), said 40 humanitarian trucks containing food and other aid have entered Tigray for the first time since 18 October. The trucks however do not contain fuel and medical supplies. Those trucks are awaiting clearance in Semera to move onwards to Tigray. OCHA reiterated that 500 trucks need to reach the affected areas every week. Food and fuel have run out in Tigray and there are fears mass starvation is taking place in the region, as seven million people are in need of aid. The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) said that it would resume its flights to Mekelle. They carried out a first flight on Wednesday, to rotate staff in and out of Tigray. The flights also allow cash to be brought into the region. The flights stopped after an inbound flight into Mekelle was forced to turn away because a government airstrike was taking place.

- [Ethiopia: Humanitarian aid needed as situation deteriorates in Tigray](#)

Ethiopia: Irish diplomats removed

The Ethiopian government has ejected four of the six Irish diplomats present in the country. The Irish minister of foreign affairs, Simon Coveney, cited Ireland's push in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as the reason for the diplomats' removal. Only the Irish ambassador and one staffer remain in Addis Ababa, although the Irish government has said that plans exist to get them out if required. Coveney said that he deeply regrets the move, as Ethiopia has been Ireland's largest aid recipient in the last five years. He said Ireland would continue to use its seat in the UNSC to push for humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia. Coveney further added that due to the deteriorating security situation, he recommended that all Irish citizens leave Ethiopia.

- [Ethiopia expels Irish diplomats as EU, UK citizens urged to flee civil war](#)

Ethiopia: US asked to stop spreading 'fake news'

The Ethiopian government has asked the United States to stop spreading "shameful fake news and defamation regarding Ethiopia". The comments come following a US warning about potential terrorist attacks in Ethiopia.

- [Ethiopia asks U.S. to stop spreading false information on war](#)

Ethiopia: UAE air bridge supports Ethiopian government

Al Jazeera has revealed that an extensive airbridge by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is supporting the Ethiopian government. They have identified at least 90 flights between Ethiopia and the UAE since September. They have come to these conclusions after analyzing satellite imagery. Among the supplies being brought in are Chinese drones, the Wing Loong drones.

- [UAE air bridge provides military support to Ethiopia gov't](#)

Ethiopia: Former NZ Prime Minister warns of potential genocide in Ethiopia

In an opinion piece in the Guardian, former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Member of the House of Lords David Alton, and South African Social Justice Activist Michael Lapsley, warn that genocide might happen in Ethiopia if action is not taken. They say that twice already, warning signs were ignored while Ethiopia, Amhara, and Eritrean forces raped and starved Tigray. They are now warning that a third atrocity might take place: "a possible mass killing of interned civilians in Addis Ababa and elsewhere." The main reason for this is that five warning signs of genocide are "flashing red". Hate speech in Ethiopia has increased, the government is mobilising ethnically based militias and vigilante groups, The government is repressing independent voices in the media, a large-scale ethnic detention of more than 30 thousand Tigrayans is taking place, and the international community is divided and indecisive. These warning signs are very similar to what was happening in Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 90s. They say the signs "could not be more clear", and that urgent action, especially by the international community, is needed.

- [The warning signs are there for genocide in Ethiopia – the world must act to prevent it](#)

Ethiopia: UN says deportations in Western Tigray continue

The United Nations is reporting new waves of large scale displacements in Western Tigray this week. The UNHCR said that they are receiving concerning reports. Several people spoke to Agence France Presse and corroborated the roundups of Tigrayans in the region. One witness told AFP that 21 buses full of Tigrayans left Humera last Saturday. They are reportedly being brought to the Tekeze river.

- ['New waves' of displacement reported in western Tigray: UN](#)

Ethiopia: Guterres calls for immediate and unconditional ceasefire

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Ethiopia. He added that no military solution could solve the civil war. Guterres, speaking in Colombia, added that he hoped the Colombian peace process could serve as an example to Ethiopia. The comments were echoed by a US official, who said that diplomacy was the “first, last, and only option”.

- [UN chief calls for immediate end to fighting in Ethiopia](#)

Ethiopia: Government bans reporting on the war

The Ethiopian government has banned news organisations from reporting on the war. Instead only those authorised by the government will be allowed to report on the progress of the war. This will further complicate the information flow on the war. With large parts of Tigray and Amhara without internet or phone network, information on the situation is further restricted.

- [News: Command Post Cautions Against Establishment Of Transitional Gov't, Unauthorized Dissemination Of Martial Intelligence](#)

Ethiopia: Deputy Prime Minister takes over

Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen has taken over the tasks from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Abiy announced on Monday that he was leaving for the front lines. Some speculate his announcement may be a smoke screen for an exile. On Tuesday it was announced that Demeke Mekonnen will take charge of the routine business in his absence. Next to being the Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, is also the minister of Foreign Affairs. He comes from Amhara and has served as a minister in various positions since 2007. He also served as Deputy Prime Minister under the previous government, led by TPLF's Hailemariam Desalegn.

- [News: Pm Abiy Providing Leadership From Battlefield; Deputy Pm Demeke In Charge Of Gov't Routine Activities: Communication Minister](#)

Sudan: Protests continue following transitional agreement

Sudan's deputy head of the sovereignty Council Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, told *Al Jazeera* that Hamdok made two proposals during negotiations with the military, adding that “we made maximum efforts but we couldn't reach a breakthrough. At that point we were left with three options, the best of which was the move we had taken.” The agreement provides for the return of Hamdok, who was deposed following the coup, as Prime Minister. Not much else is known however about the agreement. Only an unofficial translation from Arabic exists. Unlike the previous agreement which dictated the takeover of the leadership in 2022 by civilian government, the published document does not set a date for a transition to civilian government. Thousands have continued to protest on the streets following the Power-sharing agreement. The opposition however, opposes concessions to the military, and have continued to demand full civilian rule. Teargas was deployed by security forces against protestors on Thursday. The demonstrations are expected to continue for weeks and months.

- [Sudanese security forces fire tear gas at anti-coup protests](#)
- [“This Is Not a Coup”: Sudan's Potemkin Agreement](#)

Sudan: Sudanese refugees fear being expelled from Israel

The normalization of relations between Israel and Sudan sparked worries among migrants and refugees that they might lose their status and be compelled to return. The fear of being deported was fuelled by a report published on the Israeli news site Walla documenting that an Israeli mission unofficially reached Sudan to speak with the coup leaders. Requests for a response from the Israeli and Sudanese officials were not returned, *ABC News* notes. The

Israeli's Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked described Sudanese migrants as "infiltrators" and stated that they should be sent back in light of the normalization, *ABC News* reports. A Sudanese person interviewed by *ABC News* explained that "[w]e are worried because she (Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked) has always been against asylum-seekers" and added that "(...) the normalization should be through the civilian Sudanese government, not the military powers that now control Sudan".

- [Sudanese migrants in Israel fear deportation after coup](#)

South Sudan: Floods cause forced displacement in the country

South Sudan has been devastated by floods affecting 780,000 people in the country and forcing thousands to relocate. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) warns that refugee camps are in danger of being fully inundated, causing even more displacement. *MSF* warns that as flood-damaged areas are unreachable by road, access to the country has been hindered, impacting populations in rural villages in need of humanitarian relief. The city of Bentiu was particularly affected by the catastrophe. In particular, the population in the Bentiu displacement camp rapidly increased, reaching 120,000 individuals, *MSF* reports.

- [Third year of severe floods leaves nearly 800,000 people struggling](#)

Somalia: Thousands displaced due to severe drought

The United Nations (UN) warned that drought in Somalia left more than two million people suffering from serious food and water shortages. Around 100,000 individuals fled their houses in search of food and water. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Somali government issued a joint statement on Thursday stating that 2.3 million people are affected by the severe drought. The statement identifies climate change as one of the main drivers as "[t]he frequency and severity of climate-related hazards is increasing". Somalia Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Khadija Diriyee warned that households are losing their livestock and falling deeper into poverty, risking starvation. Khadija Diriyee also added "I am particularly worried about children, women, the elderly and disabled people who continue to bear the brunt of Somalia's humanitarian crisis".

- [UN sounds alarm on Somalia's 'rapidly worsening' drought](#)

Kenya: New law to facilitate refugee integration and access to work opportunities

A new law signed by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta will allow half a million refugees in Kenya to work, receive an education and integrate into Kenyan society. The law envisions the creation of three administrative institutions to deal with refugee matters, makes essential documentation more accessible to refugees, and provides increased access to schools and hospitals, *The East African* notes.

- [Kenya targets easier integration of refugees](#)

North Africa

Libya: Human rights groups call the ICC to investigate migrants abuse in Libya

Rights groups demand that the International Criminal Court start an investigation into abuses of migrants and refugees in Libya as they believe such abuses are likely to amount to crimes against humanity. The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), the *Fédération internationale pour les droits humains* (FIDH) and Lawyers for Justice in Libya (LFJL), in collaboration with survivors, filed a report where they call prosecutors to examine "armed groups, militias and Libyan state actors" for crimes including "arbitrary detention, torture, murder, persecution, sexual violence and enslavement" and identifies 19 possible suspects, *Associated Press* notes. Dorine

Llanta from the FIDH stated that “[t]he extreme scale, systemic nature, and seriousness of the abuses suffered by migrants and refugees in Libya trigger ICC jurisdiction. Our analysis of reliable open-source information and survivor testimonies clearly shows that many of these abuses may amount to crimes against humanity”.

- [Rights groups demand ICC probe into Libya migrant abuses](#)
- [Crimes against humanity in Libya: ICC must investigate](#)

Libya: 75 migrants and refugees die off the coast of Libya

At least 75 migrants and refugees died off the coast of Libya on Wednesday. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), this event brings the number of lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea this year to surpass 1,300. Meanwhile, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the IOM resettled 71 refugees from Libya to Canada, including 37 minors. The statement made on Sunday by the UNHCR indicates that the group included individuals from Syria, Sudan, Palestine and Somalia, ANI reports.

- [At least 75 migrants drowned off Libyan coasts](#)
- [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) in Libya tweet, November 20, 2021.](#)
- [71 refugees resettled from Libya to Canada: UN](#)

Europe

Europe: Europe plans strategy for human smugglers arrests

A leaked confidential document from the general secretariat of the Council of the European Union reveals the details of operational plans to combat migrant smugglers. The document includes a goal of 1,400 arrests mostly under the supervision of the European Union (EU) border agency Frontex. According to *Euobserver*, the document’s main strategic aim is to build a “criminal intelligence picture” and includes potential rules enabling Frontex “to support operational activities by means of identifying suspects in cross-border crime, namely migrant smuggling (and others)”. According to the plan, non-EU countries will participate in operations and collaborate with Frontex and European national states will have the lead on certain operations, *Euobserver* explains. The document states among others that “[t]he action will specifically focus in 2022 on fostering/boosting cooperation with Libya and Tunisia as source and transit countries, via the creation of tailored operational initiatives running, when possible, in both Italy and Libya and/or Tunisia.”

- [Revealed: EU plan to make 1,400 people-smuggling arrests in 2022](#)

UK: 27 individuals drown in the English Channel

At least 27 people drowned after their boat capsized in the English Channel near Calais on Wednesday. Authorities apprehended four persons near the Belgian border as they are suspected of being involved in the crossing. France and the United Kingdom are undertaking air and sea rescue efforts to see if any survivors can be found after a fishing boat spotted more people in the sea, *BBC* reports. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson stated it is crucial to tackle human smuggling organizations as they are “getting away with murder” and added he recognizes that current efforts to limit the migration flows traversing the Channel in small vessels have not been adequate and that UK will provide France with greater support, *BBC* notes.

- [Migrant tragedy is biggest loss of life in Channel](#)

North Macedonia: Four people arrested on suspicion of human smuggling and torture

Two Afghan minors and two Pakistani nationals have been arrested by North Macedonian authorities suspected of

smuggling and torturing migrants and refugees. The investigators suspect the individuals of having set up camps close to the Serbian border to host persons arriving from Greece and “detain migrants in the camps by force and they would take away their cell phones and personal documents, making any communication outside of the camp impossible”, *Deutsche Welle* reports. The prosecutors also suspect the four individuals of mistreating the camp residents in an extremely cruel manner, including sexual abuse, *Deutsche Welle* notes.

- [North Macedonia arrests smugglers suspected of torturing migrants](#)

Spain: Over 370 migrants and refugees rescued in the Atlantic Ocean

Over 370 migrants and refugees were rescued off the Canary Islands during the night between Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Among them were 36 women and 26 minors including two newborn babies. Meanwhile, Moroccan authorities picked up another 20 individuals on Monday. According to the *Associated Press*, in a second incident on Tuesday Moroccan officials informed Spain’s rescue agency that one person died and another had gone missing from a migrant boat.

- [Canary Islands: More than 370 migrants rescued in one night](#)

Poland/Belarus: Returned migrants told news agency they were tortured by Polish and Belarusian police

Returned migrants told the news agency *dpa* on Saturday they were beaten and tortured by Polish and Belarusian police. A 71-year-old woman told *dpa* that she was treated inhumanely. A 41-year-old interviewee stated that he was tortured by Polish and Belarusian police. A third person told *dpa* that he was abused and left without food and water. Moreover, *InfoMigrants* reports that a Syrian family lost their one-year-old child in the Poland-Belarus border region forest. Meanwhile, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated it is very plausible that Belarusian forces assisted migrants in crossing into the European Union, but he denied inviting them to the bloc, *Al Jazeera* reports. Poland has accused Lukashenko’s government of pushing migrants into the country’s border with Poland.

- [Returned Iraqi migrants claim they were tortured in Belarus and Poland](#)
- [Baby confirmed dead at Poland-Belarus border](#)
- [Lukashenko says troops may have helped refugees reach EU](#)

Hungary: Stop Soros law violates EU law, ECJ rules

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) decided that the Hungarian law known as “Stop Soros” is in violation of the European Union (EU) law. The law impedes the right to seek asylum in Hungary to individuals fleeing countries where their life and freedom is not at risk and criminalizes the support by international organizations of asylum seekers entering the country illegally, *Politico* explains. The ECJ stated that Hungary cannot ignore asylum applications on the grounds articulated by the Stop Soros law, as the EU already envisioned an exhaustive list of criteria leading to the dismissal of asylum requests. Moreover, the ECJ reminded Hungary of the right of asylum seekers to access legal assistance. The Hungarian government recognized the ECJ decision, however, it stated that it would not change its approach to migration, *Politico* notes.

- [Hungarian law criminalizing asylum seeker help breaches EU law, top court rules](#)

Greece: Asylum seekers detained in violation of their rights

According to a recent research by Oxfam and the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), migrants and asylum seekers are frequently imprisoned for administrative reasons despite the fact that this practice breaches human rights. The research shows that seven out of ten persons who entered Greece by illegal means were placed in administrative custody and the majority continued to be detained while applying for asylum, *InfoMigrants* reports. Moreover, the

report indicates that one in five persons was detained for an extended amount of time in police cells. According to Oxfam and GCR, pregnant women, children, and persons with disability were detained without adequate health treatment or legal representation. Vasilis Papastergiou from GCR said that “[i]n Greece, the detention of migrants is the rule, not the exception” and added that “[a]dministrative detention is just another tool to stop people from seeking safety in Europe”. Meanwhile, Greece is suspending the trial of aid workers who helped migrants to reach the country. Several human rights groups criticized the trial of being politically motivated as the defendants were accused of espionage, fraud and unauthorized use of radio frequency, *BBC* notes.

- [Oxfam: Greece detains migrants, refugees without reason](#)
- [Greece suspends espionage trial of 24 aid workers](#)

World

World: Asylum seeker conditions deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic

A study carried out by the professor Jean-Louis Iten for the Fondation pour les sciences sociales shows that during the COVID-19 health crisis the situation of asylum seekers significantly worsened. As of spring 2020, 57 of the 167 countries that closed their borders made no exceptions for asylum seekers, *Le Monde* reports. The asylum seekers who managed to reach France had great difficulty in submitting their asylum application due to the almost total halt in the registration process, professor Iten explains. Professor Iten added that the closure of offices and services due to lockdown restrictions prevented asylum seekers from accessing health assistance, leading to a violation of their rights to health.

- [La crise sanitaire a « significativement aggravé » la situation des réfugiés](#)

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

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