

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: Ethiopia ramps up war efforts, Frontex's role in returns to Libya, International call for vaccine equality in Africa

In this week news highlights: Ethiopian government recaptures ground; The Elders call for ceasefire; Report on spreading of sexual violence beyond Tigray; Arrests of nuns and deacons in Addis; Secondary schools in Ethiopia to close to assist war efforts; Tensions at Sudan/Ethiopia border; Hemedti warns EU and US to support government or face refugee influx; Millions displaced due to heavy floods in South Sudan; Report on Libya detention centres; NGOs find Frontex collaborated in returning migrants to Libya; 32 Somalis returned from Libya through voluntary return mechanism; Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum put in hotels in UK; NGOs urge restoration of human rights and dignity at European border; Austrian authorities arrest 15 suspected smugglers; Refugees facing hunger in Greek camps; Amnesty International accuses Greece of illegally detaining migrants and refugees; 120 refugees transferred to Italy through humanitarian corridor; International academics and leaders call for vaccine equality; and UNHCR calls for greater protection of displaced women and girls.

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: Government forces state they have recaptured ground

Ethiopian government and allied forces stated that they had taken the towns of Shewa Robit and Lalibela from Tigrayan forces. Reuters was told by the inhabitants of the towns that the Tigrayan forces left on Tuesday. Tigray forces responded on Tigray TV that they were making territorial adjustments in preparation of strategic advances. Ethiopia Map commented that airforce was heavily used by the Ethiopian government forces.

- [Ethiopia: Government claims territorial gains over Tigrayan forces near capital](#)
- [Ethiopia map](#)

Ethiopia: The Elders call for ceasefire

The independent group of global leaders known as The Elders reiterated their calls on the African Union and UN Security Council to stop the conflict from further escalating. It is now clear that African mediation at the highest level is needed to stop the fighting," said a statement The Elders released on 30 November. Former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf called on African leaders to bring all necessary pressure to achieve a ceasefire.

- [The Elders call on African leaders to push for an urgent ceasefire, mediation and humanitarian access in Ethiopia](#)

Ethiopia: Sexual violence spreads

Globe and Mail reports testimonies of sexual violence in the Amhara region by Tigrayan soldiers. Some victims have said that Tigrayans indicated the rapes to be out of revenge of earlier rapes of Tigrayan women by Ethiopian government-allied forces. Victims of the rapes have no access to healthcare or mental care, states the Globe and Mail.

- [Sexual violence as weapon of war spreads to new regions in Ethiopia](#)

Ethiopia: Six nuns and two Tigrinya deacons arrested by Ethiopian government

Six nuns and two Tigrinya deacons have been arrested on suspicion of supporting the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF). The action is thought to be part of the ethnic cleansing operation against people with Tigrinya origins that has been underway in Addis Ababa since almost one month, the Italian newspaper Faro di Roma stated. An Oromo human rights activist reached by telephone by Faro di Roma stated that the task force set up by the Ethiopian government has the only goal to erase the evidence of ethnic targeting. The activist urged for an intervention by the international community.

- [Ethiopia: Confermata la notizia delle suore arrestate](#)
- [Etiopia. Breaking News. Arrestate sei Suore cattoliche ad Addis Abeba dalla polizia politica di Abiy](#)

Ethiopia: Secondary schools to close to assist war effort

An announcement by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education on Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) stated that secondary schools were to close for one week in order to assist in harvesting of plantations of people fighting on the front lines.

- [Ethiopia shuts secondary schools to mobilise for war](#)

Sudan/Ethiopia: Tensions at the border

Various media report that Sudan fired rockets into Ethiopia on Tuesday, after the Sudanese military accused Ethiopia of an attack on Al Fashaqa, disputed land between Ethiopia and Sudan. However, much remained unclear about the attack, which Ethiopia denies and blames on the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Meanwhile, the Oromo Liberation Army advances towards Addis Ababa, states *France24*.

- [Rockets fired as Ethiopia, Sudan clash again in border row](#)
- [War in Ethiopia: Oromo Liberation Army advances towards Addis Ababa](#)

Sudan: Hemedti warns that the EU must support latest government or face refugee influx

Sudanese General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) told *POLITICO* that the European Union (EU) and United States (US) would have little choice but to support the latest Sudanese government. He stated that otherwise, the EU may face a refugee crisis, and that the military they criticise was keeping the refugee flows under control. The EU has threatened to halt its financial support to Sudan. Protests continue in Sudan as civilians reject the power-sharing agreement with the military that is being put in place. People took to the streets on Tuesday, and were met with violence and teargas. In the interview with *POLITICO*, Hemedti said that the military regime will allow free elections next year, and that Sudan could play an important role in helping and ending conflicts in neighboring countries such as Libya, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Eritrea.

- [Top Sudan general warns country could be source of refugee influx to Europe](#)
- [Sudan security forces fire tear gas at Khartoum protesters](#)

South Sudan: 1.7 million displaced due to heavy floods

An estimated 1.7 million individuals are internally displaced in South Sudan as a result of the heavy floods. According to the United Nations (UN), this number is going to increase in the next few months. The UN further noted that the floods have made it impossible to cultivate some lands since last year and many livestock have died, forcing the population of many areas to rely on foraging. In an interview with *The Guardian*, a mother of seven children living on the higher ground of Paguir said that “[w]e are not used to collecting water lilies but the flood water forces us to. We can spend close to five hours looking for them in the water” and added that “when you eat water lilies it feels like you didn’t eat at all”. In the country, 2.5 million people are facing severe food insecurity while another 100,000 are considered close to famine, *The Guardian* reports.

- [The rising cost of the climate crisis in flooded South Sudan – in pictures](#)
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North Africa

Libya: Report on Libya’s network of detention centres

The New Yorker published a report in collaboration with the Outlaw Ocean Project shining a light on Libya’s network of detention centres holding migrants and refugees. The report calls the EU’s collaboration with Libya on stopping migration a “shadow immigration system”. The report provides the context on how this system was put into place.

- [The Secretive Prisons That Keep Migrants Out of Europe](#)

Libya: Frontex found to collaborate with Libyan authorities to send back migrant boats

Investigations by NGOs found that on several occasions European countries’ authorities transmitted video footage produced by Frontex surveillance to Libyan coast guards. The material was then used by Libyan authorities to apprehend migrants and refugees even when they were outside of Libyan waters, and return them to Libyan detention centers. The Dutch nonprofit organisation Lighthouse Reports collected evidence showing that “[b]oats in distress are spotted, communications take place between European actors and the Libyan Coast Guard. No notice is given to nearby commercial shipping or NGO vessels despite its proximity to urgent situations where boats are in distress on the open sea”. Evidence gathered by the European transparency group FragDenStaat further shows that Frontex sent the locations of migrants and refugees boats to Libyan coast guards.

- [Europe’s border agency under fire for aiding Libya’s brutal migrant detentions](#)

Libya/Somalia: 32 Somali returned from Libya

32 Somali migrants have been returned to Somalia from Libya through the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme funded by the European Union (EU) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). One of the returnees explained that he travelled through Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya, where he was threatened of being killed by traffickers in return for money, the IOM reports.

- [32 Somali Migrants Assisted to Return Safely from Libya](#)
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Europe

UK: Child refugees seeking asylum in the UK are being placed into hotels

Minors seeking asylum in the UK are being put in hotels. The practice could violate the right of children to enjoy protection and safeguarding as guaranteed under the 1989 Children Act, Wilsons solicitor Rebecca Ives stated.

According to *The Guardian*, around 250 unaccompanied children that reached the United Kingdom (UK) coasts with small boats will be put in hotels. Bridget Chapman from Kent Refugee Action Network explained that hotels are not right places for unaccompanied children, as they have no supervision and it is not sure how long they will be required to stay there.

- [‘Shocking’ that UK is moving child refugees into hotels](#)

Poland/Belarus: Humanitarian NGOs call for the restoration of human rights and dignity at the European border

Humanitarian organizations signed a joint appeal to call the European Union (EU) to restore human rights and values at the EU border. The signatories urge the EU to allow asylum seekers to enter the border and humanitarian organizations to access the area to provide assistance to those in need. The appeal also says that “[t]he people at the centre of the crisis are exploited within the security conflict between the EU and Belarus, but these people are not in themselves a security threat, and should not be seen or treated by either side as if they were a weapon”. While condemning the Belarusian government actions, the NGOs call for a EU action that must be in line with European and international standards of dignity, *InfoMigrants* reports. Meanwhile, a Meta report on Wednesday said Belarusian KGB created fake profiles to criticize Polish authorities and spread allegations of force and abuse by Polish police against migrants and refugees at the border. The profiles were used to share criticism in English, Polish, and Kurdish, as well as sharing footage of Polish police using force against migrants, *Al Jazeera* reports.

- [Dozens of NGOs tell EU to ‘restore rights at Europe borders’](#)
- [Belarus set up fake accounts to inflame migrants: Facebook’s Meta](#)

Austria: 15 suspected smugglers arrested

15 individuals were arrested in Austria suspected of being part of a human smuggling organization that allegedly transported 700 migrants and refugees into the country. *Deutsche Welle* (DW) reports that the arrest took place on 16 November. 25 vehicles were intercepted transporting around 200 to 300 individuals. Some of the migrants and refugees from Syria, Lebanon and Egypt paid €4,000-€5,000 each to be transported from the Serbian-Hungarian border to northern Austria via Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The majority of the migrants and refugees stated that they planned to travel to Germany after that, *DW* notes.

- [Austrian police arrest 15 suspected people smugglers](#)

Greece: Refugees in Greece are at risk of hunger, NGOs warn

27 NGOs and civil society organizations warn that the suspension of financial aid and food assistance to recognized refugees and rejected asylum seekers is causing a hunger crisis in Greek refugee camps. According to the Greek Refugee Council, the Greek government halted providing assistance to those individuals whose asylum applications were accepted on the basis of legislation that took effect in October 2021. Rejected asylum seekers are also impacted, as they cannot access housing or medical care and have no right to work. The Director of Save the Children Europe Anita Bay states that “[t]hrough both its actions and inaction, the Government of Greece is creating a hunger crisis amongst refugees and asylum seekers in the country. It is unlawful, unnecessary, and totally unacceptable for this to be happening in the [European Union] EU”. Meanwhile, Greece opened two new “holding camps” near Turkey on Saturday. The new camps are among the so-called “Closed Controlled Structures” funded by the EU, equipped with barbed wire fences and ID and fingerprint scanning, Reuters explains. Back in May 2021, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Dunja Mijatovic expressed concern that the camps’ “close nature” might lead to long-term loss of liberty, Reuters reports. Moreover, the Greek Refugees Council published a report documenting the prison-like conditions of the Samos refugee camp. The report shows that refugees hosted in the camp are under constant surveillance and face isolation, *ANSA* reports.

- [NGOs raise alarm at growing hunger amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Greece](#)
- [Greece opens two more holding centers for migrants on islands](#)
- [Conditions at Samos camp 'tragic', says Greek Refugee Council](#)

Greece: Around 100 migrants illegally detained in Samos camp, Amnesty International finds

Amnesty International (AI) accused Greece of illegally detaining migrants in Samos camp. The accusation follows Greek authorities' statement deciding that migrants without valid asylum cards are not allowed to leave the refugee camp. However, AI reports that the individuals concerned by the statement are those who had their cards withdrawn following the successful asylum application or those who have not opened the asylum request procedures yet. According to the AI report, around 100 individuals are being banned from leaving the camp. AI migration researcher Adriana Tidona said the Greek camp seems more like a prison rather than "a place to house people seeking safety".

- [Amnesty accuses Greece of illegally detaining migrants in Samos camp](#)

Italy: Over a hundred refugees reached Italy through humanitarian corridors

70 refugees from Syria arrived in Italy through a humanitarian corridor on Monday. The individuals will be hosted by local communities and children and adults will have access to school and Italian language study programmes, ANSA explains. Another group of 50 refugees arriving from Niger was transported to Italy through a humanitarian corridor. The Italian charity Caritas said that the project "has allowed hundreds of refugees, many of whom had a dramatic experience in Libyan prisons, to arrive in a legal and safe way.

- [70 Syrian refugees arrive in Rome via humanitarian corridors](#)

Italy: 50 Asylum seekers to be relocated to Italy from Cyprus after Pope's Pledge

Pope Francis has promised to have 50 refugees currently residing in Cyprus relocated to Italy by the end of the year; the cleric confirmed that by the request of the pope, the 50 vulnerable refugees will be transferred to Rome. The promise came after a visit of the Pope to Cyprus, where aid workers say they are overwhelmed by the numbers of arrivals. Greek authorities have been accused of violent pushbacks of refugees.

- [Pope arrives in Cyprus after pledge to relocate 50 refugees to Italy](#)

World

World: International academics and leaders call for vaccine solidarity

Scientists and leaders from all over the world signed a statement directed at European High Representative Josep Borrell and Director General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to urge for equal access to vaccines. In light of the Omicron variant, "a global strategy to fight the pandemic must include a plan to protect Africa" said the statement. This should include widespread technical and financial support, transfer of vaccines and the building of trust, say the signatories. A petition was launched on the basis of the statement.

- [The Outbreak of Omicron: Scientists and Leaders Call for Collaboration with Africa](#)
- [Scientists and politicians ask for WHO and EU support for vaccinations in Africa](#)
- [Petition Vaccine Equality: a Global Response of Collaboration with Africa on COVID-19](#)

World: UNHCR urges for greater effort to address violence against displaced women and girls

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) urged for greater support to fight violence against displaced women and girls.

According to the UNHCR, the COVID-19 pandemic increased events of domestic violence, underage marriages, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and abuse across the world. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called “national and local authorities to do more to protect the rights of refugee, internally displaced and stateless women and girls” and added that “[f]orcibly displaced and stateless people must also be included in all national responses to gender-based violence. Survivors must be supported to heal and recover, and perpetrators must be brought to justice”.

- [UNHCR: Surge in violence against displaced women](#)

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

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