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Horn Highlights: Ethiopia detains UN staff, US orders evacuation of non-essential personnel, Sudan protests continue amidst internet blackout

In this week's Horn highlights: Ethiopia detains sixteen UN staff members; EHRC says arrests appear to be "identity based"; UNSC calls for peace negotiations; US and AU attempt to mediate in the conflict; HRW says International action needed to prevent atrocities; The US orders evacuation of non-essential personnel; Heavy fighting continues; Eritrean Refugees in Addis Ababa prison; Troika statement urges resumption of democratic transition; Protests continue in Sudan; Sudanese Civil Society calls for the restoration of the access to the internet; Sudan Court orders internet to be restored.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia: Ethiopia detains sixteen UN staff members

Ethiopia has detained at least sixteen local UN staff members and dependents working in Addis Ababa. A UN spokesperson said that the UN has submitted a request to the Ethiopian foreign ministry to immediately release the detained staffers. The spokesperson also said that UN security staff have visited the arrested employees. The Ethiopian government has not yet commented on the detentions. Sources have told AFP that the staff members were detained in raids targeting ethnic Tigrayans. According to an AFP source, "Some of them were taken from their homes".

- [U.N. says at least 16 staff, dependents detained in Ethiopia](#)
- [Over A Dozen Local UN Staff Held In Ethiopia: Humanitarian Sources](#)

Ethiopia: EHRC says arrests appear to be "identity based"

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has released a statement saying that it is concerned that the arrests being made in relation to the state of emergency were "identity based". The Commission, an Ethiopian government appointed body, also said that it was concerned that the detentions included "mothers with children and the elderly". Of further concern to the EHRC is that family members are not allowed to visit the detained. According to AP, reports of mass detentions of Tigrayans continue to come in from Addis Ababa. An Ethiopian Church official told AP that "dozens of priests, monks, deacons and others had been detained in the capital because of their ethnicity." According to AFP, Ethiopian police officers raided the Cathedral in Addis Ababa "forcing a dozen ethnic Tigrayan priests and monks into a pickup truck." APF interviewed dozens of people who said that often minimal evidence was

used to build up cases against them. Thousands of ethnic Tigrayans remain in custody, many have not been heard from since they were arrested. Witnesses have told the AFP that the mass arrests of Tigrayans is made “to make us live in fear.”

- [Arrests in connection with SoE appear to be “identity-based” - Addis Standard](#)
- [Mass arrest of Tigrayans sow fear in Ethiopia](#)
- [People fleeing Ethiopia allege attacks, forced conscription](#)

Ethiopia: UNSC calls for peace negotiations

The United Nations Security Council met in an open meeting on the situation in Ethiopia. The African Union envoy to the Horn, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, said that the “window of opportunity is very little and the time is short for any intervention”. He also asked the international community to rally behind the AU peacemaking efforts. He further added that opening negotiations will not be easy, as there are more than two parties involved. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs added that the risk of Ethiopia descending into a wider civil war was increasing. Council members broadly supported peace negotiations and mediation.

- [Voicing Support for African Union’s Peace Efforts in Ethiopia, Security Council Speakers Urge Political Dialogue Between Parties to Prevent Disaster](#)

Ethiopia: US and AU trying to mediate

US envoy to the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, is in Addis Ababa, and has met with the African Union’s Horn envoy, Olusegun Obasanjo, UN Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, UN Undersecretary General Martin Griffiths, and others. Feltman has also travelled to Kenya, to meet with President Kenyatta to promote a ceasefire. In a statement, the state department said that “the United States will continue to work with international partners to address the crisis in Ethiopia, including through action with the United Nations, the African Union, and other relevant partners”. Obasanjo has travelled to Tigray to meet with the TPLF Tigray President, Gebremichael Debrezion, to discuss a ceasefire. Obasanjo has told the BBC that he is widely consulting to understand the issues. He said that it “was absolutely incorrect” that people had rejected his efforts at mediation. Obasanjo also emphasized that all efforts for mediation need to go through his office.

- [The AU's special envoy Olusegun Obasanjo holds talks in Ethiopia](#)
- [News: Us Special Envoy Returns To Ethiopia](#)
- [African Union, U.S. see small window of opportunity to end Ethiopia fighting](#)

Ethiopia: HRW says international action needed to prevent atrocities

Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council to step up and act to avert further atrocities in Ethiopia. “The Ethiopian government, its allies, and opponents should stop actions and policies that risk inciting abuses, and take urgent steps to ensure that the rights of all communities are fully protected,” stated Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch. “It’s critical for African leaders and UN Security Council members to work together to take immediate action to avert further atrocities – or they will have failed the Ethiopian people.” HRW highlighted that the state of emergency in Ethiopia increases the risk of arbitrary arrest and detention of minority communities, and emboldens the “abusive elements within the security forces”. In addition, the state of emergency could also adversely affect other elements of civil society, such as the media, activist groups and human rights organisations, warned HRW.

- [Ethiopia: International Action Needed to Prevent Atrocities | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](#)

Ethiopia: The US orders evacuation of non-essential personnel

The United States and other countries have ordered the evacuation of personnel from Addis Ababa. On Saturday, the US state department ordered its non-essential personnel to leave the country using commercial options. This order came two days after they authorized non-essential personnel to leave. The embassy added that its services remained open, but that it could not guarantee help if commercial flights out of the country become unavailable. Other countries have urged their nationals to leave the country while commercial flights are available.

- [Security Alert: Ordered Departure of Non-Emergency U.S. Government Employees and Family Members from U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa](#)
- [Ethiopia crisis: Britons urged to leave country as Foreign Office updates travel advice](#)

Ethiopia: Heavy fighting continues

Heavy fighting has continued across the Tigray and Afar regions. The Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) have encountered heavy resistance from Afari forces on the road to Mile. South of Dessie, the TDF and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) have taken Kemise, a town 325 km from Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) and the Ethiopian government have been fortifying Addis Ababa. It has continued the registration of weapons, and the organization of volunteers. The ENDF has called on former soldiers who are physically fit and mentally ready to register with the ENDF. The Amhara regional government is also reorganizing its forces. One person told AP that authorities “started collecting people. Young men and boys are being forced to join the fighting.” According to the person AP spoke to, authorities were going from house to house at night and taking people away. These men are then sent to Amhara to fight against the TDF.

- [News: Ethiopian Defense Forces Calls On Former Armed Forces To Register, Stand By National Army To Defend Country](#)
- [People fleeing Ethiopia allege attacks, forced conscription](#)

Ethiopia: Eritrean Refugees in Addis Ababa prison

It is reported that many Eritrean refugees in Addis Ababa have been arrested as part of the mass arrests of people who speak Tigrinya (the language in Tigray and Eritrea) in Addis Ababa. Additionally, according to reports, the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) is now asking money for its services as part of increased corruption practices. It is reported that refugees who traveled to the new refugee camp, Debarq, find food and housing inadequate. However, they are prevented from returning to Addis Ababa.

Sudan: Troika statement urges resumption of democratic transition

A statement by a Troika of Norway, the United States and the United Kingdom has urged the leadership of Sudan to put the democratic transition process back on track. After speaking with General Burhan, the Troika stated that Prime Minister Hamdok should be restored to power and that the Constitutional Document should be restored. The Troika also urged for an end to the violence against peaceful protestors and the release of those detained since 25 October.

- [Twitter message @UKinSudan](#)

Ethiopia: Internet shut-down in Tigray, concealing hunger and famine

In Tigray, the internet has been blocked for many months now. The opening of access to communications and ending of the siege of the state is one of the preconditions for the TPLF to a cease-fire and to start negotiations. Due to the internet black-out there is little information on the conditions in Tigray “where more than five million lack food and an estimated 400,000 now live in famine-like conditions” and efforts to mobilize assistance “are made more difficult due to the inability to move cash, fuel and supplies into the region.”

- [Ethiopia: Future of Tigray and Horn of Africa ‘in grave uncertainty’](#)
- [Facebook, WhatsApp and other services restricted in Ethiopia after exam paper leak](#)

Sudan: Coup Leader says he will not be part of government after transition

People have continued to protest on the streets in Sudan. A second “million man march” has been called on Saturday in Khartoum. The Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors that 14 people have been killed in protests since the coup. At least 300 have been wounded. General al-Burhan, the leader of the coup, has denied that the army has killed anyone. Al-Burhan has also told Al-Jazeera that he would not be part of a government after a transition to a civilian government. Hamdok, the deposed Prime Minister, has sought reassurance from the military that any agreement would mean a return to the pre-coup power sharing agreements.

- [Burhan says he will not be part of Sudan gov’t after transition](#)
- [Sudan court orders end to internet shutdown](#)

Sudan: Civil Society calls for the restoration of the access to the internet

The internet was cut off on the order of the leaders of the coup since 25 October and there have been 430 arrest warrants and 124 dismissal decisions by the court, according to an internal source. According to a spokesperson of the civil society organisations in Sudan, a vast majority of people do not accept the coup. The civil society demands that: 1. Access to the internet is restored; 2. The reign of terror is stopped; and 3. Prime Minister Hamdok is released and his government reinstated. Hamdok is regarded as a leader who has the support of the vast majority of the people in Sudan, a spokesperson said. New demonstrations are planned in Sudan for this weekend.

- [Authorities in Sudan must stop imposing telecommunication blackouts to control information flow during military coup](#)

Sudan: Court orders internet to be restored

AlJazeera reports that a Sudanese court has ordered the end to the internet shutdown that has repressed the outflow of information since the military coup on 25 October. The internet blackout has made it difficult for civil society to communicate internally and externally. So far, the internet connection remains blocked. There are reports from the media in Sudan that General Burhan, the coup leader, would have ordered the dismissal of the judge who ruled that the internet should be restored.

- [Sudan court orders end to internet shutdown](#)

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

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