

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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**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 organisations, civil society, and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and across Africa. The Situation Reports can be found [here](#). To receive the situation report in your e-mail, [click here](#). You can unsubscribe at any moment through the link at the bottom of each e-mail.

## Situation in Djibouti (per 17 May)

- Pictures of military trucks convoys in Djibouti show a new build-up of tension in the Horn (pictures printed below).

## Situation in Eritrea (per 17 May)

- Pictures shared on the internet of Round 34 of Eritrean National Service leaving the Sawa training camp for Asmara to join the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Independence Day festivities on 24 May.
- The Independence Day marks Eritrean independence from Ethiopia when liberation troops entered Asmara on 24 May 1991. The celebrations this year are announced under the title: "Independent Choice: Backbone of Our Pride."
- It is notable that the uniforms of the Eritrean 34<sup>th</sup> Round are similar to the Ethiopian uniforms.
- It has been previously observed that the Eritrean military have been wearing Ethiopian instead of Eritrean uniforms in some locations at certain periods during the war in Tigray.
- The National service is a situation comparable with forced labour, or slavery, which the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea concluded could qualify as Crimes against Humanity.

## Situation in Ethiopia (per 17 May)

- Reports indicate that Ethiopian PM Abiy is focused on access to the Red Sea. Reports in Tigrinya refer to covert expressions of this intention of Ethiopians to reclaim the Red Sea.

## Regional Situation (per 17 May)

- IOM is meeting Eritrean Minister of Foreign Affairs Osman Saleh in Nairobi. An observer says this in "not good news" as "IOM repatriated 50 Eritreans from Libya 2018/2019".
- Repatriation of refugees to Eritrea is contested. Two recent rulings by the UN Committee Against Torture criticise Switzerland for its treatment of rejected asylum seekers from Eritrea. It was found that someone who was 'voluntary' returned to Eritrea was tortured upon return to the country.

## International Situation (per 17 May)

- The Economist has issued a statement in which it deplores the expulsion of journalist Tom Gardner.
- The Economist rejects the characterisation of Mr Gardner in the letter that announced the withdrawal of his press accreditation.

- The Economist states that Mr Gardner “is an outstanding reporter who adheres to the highest standards of journalistic ethics” and his reports from Ethiopia, including from Tigray, have been “professional, unbiased and often courageous.”
- The Economist observes erosion of press freedom in Ethiopia, as the government has expelled a reporter for the New York Times and arrested or detained at least nine Ethiopian journalists.
- Ethiopia signed a grant agreement with The World Bank (WB) for US\$300 million (ETB 15.6 billion) to “support the reconstruction and recovery efforts of conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia”.
- The grant agreement will support projects in Amhara, Afar, Tigray, Oromia, and Benishangul regions.
- Tigray has been under a shut-down of internet, banking, and other services, while civil servants have not been paid, and some aid organisations have been blocked from working in the region.
- Israel is urged to “change course” and “back Sudan’s pro-democracy forces” rather than supporting “a military regime” which is “aligned with and emulating Putin’s methods”, writes Sheldon Gellar.
- In a Communiqué by the G-7, meeting in Weissenhaus, Germany on 14 May 2022, the group expresses concern over the situation in the Horn.
- The G-7 states that “Political instability, weak governance, armed conflicts, militias and terrorist groups as well as growing militarization of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea threaten democratic achievements and economic reforms of the recent years.”
- The G-7 warns that the “emergence of famine-like conditions” is highly concerning and that “insecurity and politicised access” impede life-saving aid as the poorest suffer most from this.

## Links of interest

[Twitter - Pictures of Round 34th of Eritrean National Service](#)

[Twitter - IOM meeting with Eritrean Minister of Foreign Affairs](#)

[Twitter - 31st Eritrean Independence Anniversary](#)

[Twitter - Any Ethiopian who wants to die now should die for the Red Sea](#)

[Swiss authorities claims about “safe return” for Eritreans blown apart by torture victim](#)

[Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has consistently said that his main focus is not Tigray but the Red Sea](#)

[WB signs \\$300 m grant agreement to support recovery of conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia](#)

[Press Statement: The Economist](#)

[Israel's short-sighted support for Sudan's military coup leaders](#)

[G7 Germany 2022 Foreign Ministers' Communiqué \(14 May 2022, Weissenhaus\)](#)



Images from Eritrea. Source: <https://twitter.com/GhideonMusa/status/1526203309337501697/photo/1>

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