

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

## No. 369- 09 February, 2023

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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 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.

Due to a technical issue, the situation report was not sent through the mailing list in the past two days. Please find the situation report of [7 February 2023 here](#) and [8 February 2023 here](#).

### Regional Situation (per 09 February)

- Kenyan President William Ruto and Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki held bilateral talks today (09 February) in Nairobi and agreed to permanently remove visa requirements for their citizens.
- They reportedly said the waiver of the visa requirement will enhance their bilateral economic relations.
- In addition, Kenya is opening an embassy in the Eritrean capital of Asmara, effective immediately.
- President Isaias indicated that Eritrea would rejoin IGAD.
- In a joint media briefing, President Ruto said: "with the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, we must cooperate in mapping out mutually beneficial strands of economic opportunities for our countries."
- President Isaias said: "We will keep promoting joint investment and work together towards enhancing sustainable peace and security."
- In a rare appearance in international media, Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki skipped a question on the continued presence of his troops in Ethiopia even after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement which stipulates their withdrawal, says *Reuters*.
- Responding to a reporter's question, President Isaias Afwerki said "You talk about the withdrawal or no withdrawal, we've said this is nonsense [...] Don't provoke us into a misunderstanding. Why are we bothered about Eritrean troops who are there or not there, come out or not come out?"
- The President also refused to respond to a question about how many people were killed by Eritrean troops in Tigray, and a question about his succession. "Everybody talking about human rights violations here and there - rape, looting - this is a fantasy," Isaias stated.

### Situation in Tigray (per 09 February)

- IFEX, a global network of organisations for freedom of expression and information, says that Internet connection is being gradually restored in Tigray but its speed is slow, limited to 2G services.
- IFEX added that many of its areas in the Tigray region have no internet.
- Aid groups are facing challenges to access Irob and Gulo Mekeda areas of the eastern zone of Tigray, Irob Anina Civil Society (IACS) reports.
- The organisation also said aid agencies are finding it difficult to reach Adet, Egela and Naeder areas of the central zone of Tigray.
- Tigrayan civil servants continue to provide services without any salary payment since June 2021.

### Situation in Ethiopia (per 09 February)

- The Ethiopian Joint Security and Intelligence Task Force warned both sides of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church conflict to stop calling for unauthorised demonstrations and creation of unrest.

- The Ethiopian Patriarch Abune Mathias called for demonstrations starting on 12 February, and the breakaway synod called for demonstrations on the same day.
- The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) filed a request to ban the three breakaway archbishops and the 25 bishops from accessing church possessions for three months at the Federal High Court. During this time, the EOTC plans to file a formal lawsuit. The ruling is expected on Friday.
- Ethiopian Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide and Ousmane Dione, World Bank director for Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan, signed an Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement.
- Through the agreement, the World Bank granted 40 million USD to Ethiopia for emission reduction, reports *Ethiopian Press Agency*.
- The Agreement aims to fund the biocarbon initiative for sustainable forest landscapes.
- Ethiopia has set up a request for proposal for the 'partial privatisation' of the telecom sector.
- Data from the National Bank of Ethiopia shows Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into the country have increased in the third quarter of 2022.
- According to the National bank of Ethiopia, FDI into Ethiopia has increased from \$874.3 million in the second quarter to \$906.1 million in the third quarter of 2022.

### **Situation in Eritrea (per 09 February)**

- Severe human rights abuses, including punishment of family members, took place during waves of forced round-ups of people accused of evading the national service, says *Human Rights Watch (HRW)*.
- HRW calls for targeted sanctions against Eritrea in relation to collective punishment in the context of forced conscription.
- Retaliation against family members has especially increased since September 2022, when Eritrea re-engaged in the military campaign in Tigray.
- Eritrean authorities arbitrarily detained or expelled the relatives of alleged draft evaders during forced military conscription from their homes, reports HRW. Houses were then confiscated.
- Eritrean authorities have allegedly targeted old parents as well as women with young children, pressing them to locate their missing relatives from military conscription.

### **International Situation (per 09 February)**

- US Special envoy to the Horn of Africa, Mike Hammer, called on Eritrean troops and other non-ENDF forces to fully withdraw from Tigray.
- He also said progress has been made in humanitarian access and restoration of services.
- UNHCR Chief Filippo Grandi calls for more resources for assistance to refugees and IDPs in Ethiopia.

### **Links of interest**

[President Ruto: Kenya-Eritrea visa requirements abolished](#)

[Kenya-Eritrea permanently abolish visa requirements for their citizens](#)

[Eritrean president sidesteps questions about troops in Ethiopia](#)

[Twitter: Irob Anina Civil Society](#)

[Ethiopia Signs the first Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement \(ERPA\) with the World Bank](#)

[Twitter: Call for proposal partial privatisation telecom Ethiopia](#)

[Twitter: IFEX](#)

[News: Joint Security, Intelligence Task Force cautions against unauthorized rallies, threatens to take actions as Orthodox Church Schism takes toll](#)

[Eritrea: Crackdown on Draft Evaders' Families](#)

[Twitter: Yonas Negussie on Press Briefing on Mike Hammer](#)

[UN calls for more humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia](#)

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