

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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## Situation in Tigray (per 27 February)

- In an interview with Tigray television, a Tigrayan teen reported she experienced the horror of abduction and sex slavery in the Afar region of Ethiopia.
- The teen said that she and 5 other women and girls were abducted in the Abala area of Afar and taken to Awash city where she was repeatedly raped for 8 months after which they finally escaped.
- She became pregnant after she was raped.
- Tigray Mekelle city administration and SURE construction company signed an agreement to build 62 km of asphalt and gravel road with a budget of 6.1 billion birr, reports *Dimtsi Woyane*.
- This appears to be the beginning of reconstruction in the war affected Tigray region.

## Situation in Ethiopia (per 27 February)

- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) calls for lifting restrictions on social media in place since 10 February, states EHRC chief commissioner Daniel Bekelle on Twitter.
- The chief commissioner also said, "Restrictions on the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media should be an exception, legitimate, necessary & proportional."
- Ethiopian journalist and dissident Eskinder Nega has reportedly been released from prison after two days of detention in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, says *AFP* quoting a statement from Nega's opposition party, the Balderas for Genuine Democracy party.
- The party said Eskinder Nega was arrested on 25 February and then jailed in Bahir Dar city, the capital of the Amhara region.
- In its statement, the party said "Before his arrest, Eskinder did not have a criminal charge to his name, was not on a wanted list, and was not facing a court summons."
- Four Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) officials who are in prison have been denied treatment despite being critically ill, stated spokesperson of OLF Lemmi Gemechu to *Addis Standard*.

## Regional Situation (per 27 February)

- Somaliland military has withdrawn from several locations including the strategic town of Tukaraq between Laascaanood and Garowe.
  - In the last three weeks, over 100 people have been killed in the fighting between Somaliland military and local clan fighters who want three regions to break away from Somaliland and rejoin Somalia.
  - The relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia has "significantly improved" compared to the past, stated the Somaliland region's Foreign Affairs committee representative Dr. Essa Kayd.
  - He mentioned that Somaliland is a buffer zone to Ethiopia.
  - He was also quoted as saying "there were a few hiccups between the two governments in the last four years but that has been resolved. I think the relationship is great now."
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- The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) said it has started investigations into how and why its helicopter crashed on 25 February in southern Somalia, killing three passengers on board, according to *CGTN*.
- The AU mission said its helicopter was on a training mission for casualty evacuation drills when it crashed in the Baledogle area.
- "Three of the eleven passengers on board lost their lives. Eight injured officers have been evacuated to Mogadishu for urgent medical attention," the ATMIS said in a statement.
- 58 people, among which 36 Russians, were questioned in relation to gold smuggling in Sudan, reports *Bloomberg*. It arrested one Russian employee.
- Sudan is said by anonymous people to have acted in order to appease the West, which fears Russia's growing influence in Africa.
- The UN states that about 4 million children and women in Sudan are suffering from acute malnutrition, reports the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Sudan. The food situation in the county is further deteriorating.
- OCHA said in a statement "about 4 million children under five and pregnant and lactating women are estimated to be acutely malnourished and need humanitarian lifesaving nutrition services in 2023, of these 611,000 are facing severe acute malnutrition".
- Inadequate dietary intake, high prevalence of disease, inadequate care and feeding practices, combined with suboptimal health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services reportedly aggravated the malnutrition situation.
- In addition, conflict and climate-related disasters contribute to the high humanitarian needs.

### **International Situation (per 27 February)**

- The United Nations Human Rights Council will reportedly debate the alleged war crimes in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, according to *BBC Africa*.
- UN secretary general António Guterres is expected to open the United Nations Human Rights Council's five-week session in Geneva which starts today.
- The attempts of Ethiopia to terminate the mandate of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) are unprecedented, states Horn of Africa Director for Human Rights Watch Laetitia Bader.
- She warns of the danger of failure to hold perpetrators of crimes committed during the war to account for the sake of peace building.

### **Links of interest**

[Tigrayan Teen Recounts Horror of Abduction Into Sex Slavery](#)  
[Mekelle city administration announces a road building project](#)  
[Ethiopian chief human rights commissioner calls for restrictions on social media](#)  
[Ethiopian dissident Eskinder Nega freed from detention: party](#)  
[Addis Standard on Facebook](#)  
[ATMIS probes helicopter crash with three people killed in Somalia](#)  
[Somalia: Somaliland military withdraws from Tukaraq near Las Anod](#)  
[Somaliland as a buffer zone for Ethiopia, Essa Kayd](#)  
[Russians Probed Over Gold in Sudan as West Vies for Influence](#)  
[Sudan: Humanitarian Key Messages \(February 2023\)](#)  
[UN to debate alleged war crimes in Ethiopia's Tigray](#)

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