

Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

No. 431 - 15 May 2023

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.

Situation in Sudan (per 15 May)

- Talks resumed between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Jeddah, but heavy airstrikes continued over the weekend in Khartoum and surrounding cities.
- Al-Burhan froze the bank accounts of the RSF and affiliated firms. He also removed Hussain Yahia Jankol as head of Sudan's central bank.
- Sudanese airspace will remain closed until at least 31 May 2023.
- Internet levels in Sudan dropped to 1% of regular levels, reports Netblocks.
- A Coptic Church was attacked, injuring five people including a priest. RSF was responsible for the attack, a source told Reuters.
- Fighting intensified in El Geneina, West Darfur. At least over 100 people were killed there since the start of the conflict, stated the Darfur Bar Association.

Refugee Situation (per 15 May)

- 936,000 people have been newly displaced due to the conflict in Sudan, of which 736,200 internally.
- More than 82,000 children fled from Sudan to neighbouring countries and an estimated 368,000 are internally displaced within Sudan, said UNICEF.
- Diabetic refugees fleeing Sudan face difficulties to keep their insulin cooled down amid extreme heat waves during the day.

Situation in Tigray (per 15 May)

- Movements of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) towards the Eritrean border are reported in Tigray (Northern Ethiopian border).
- Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) are reportedly in West Tigray but not in the highlands and not in Humera.
- The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) refused to reinstate the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as a political party.
- The party's registration was cancelled in January 2021 during the Tigray war. Legal reasons have been quoted on the reasons for the position of NEBE.
- The TPLF wrote a letter requesting the party to be reinstated on grounds of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. NEBE claimed there are "no provisions" to restore the party and states the TPLF has to submit a re-registration request.
- Positioning regarding assets confiscated from the TPLF are also quoted as a reason for the issue.
- Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed is opposed to Debretsion Gebremichael remaining head of the TPLF, observers state. Debretsion remained leader of the TPLF, when Getachew became President of Tigray.
- Debretsion was reportedly in Addis Ababa on Saturday to attempt to resolve the situation, but he was unsuccessful.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 15 May)

- Ethiopia is concerned that imports of 7.7 million quintiles of fertilisers, which were delivered in Djibouti, are stranded as the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has not delivered a letter of credit.

- The bill for fertiliser input increased significantly due to the corona crisis and the war in Ukraine, with Russia being a main supplier, which is under sanctions.
- Talks on debt restructuring between the Ethiopian government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have stalled, as IMF seeks assurances from creditors that Ethiopia is able to service its credits.
- A demonstration held in Gondar aimed to give a push to FANO militia to come to the negotiation table with the government, turned against PM Abiy. Demonstrators, who were paid to turn up, left security forces confused. The demonstration was eventually cracked down upon, says a source.

Regional Situation (per 15 May)

- Heavy flooding has followed the extreme drought in Somalia. Pictures of the town Balad-Weyne in South Central Somalia show the area entirely flooded. It affects an IDP camp located near the town.
- 200.000 people were displaced in central Somalia due to flooding of the Shebelle river.
- Al-Sisi and Al-Burhan reportedly have a military agreement in which the Egyptian army will have access to two airports as a permanent basis and a military base in the Al-Fashaqz triangle near the GERD-dam.

International Situation (per 15 May)

- Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki arrived in China for an official state visit of four days. Arriving on 14 May, he is expected to meet with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and National Development and Trade and Industry.
- US Ambassador to South Africa, Reuben Brigety, has made public that the US alleges South Africa to supply arms to Russia through the Russian vessel the Lady R. Ukraine President Zelensky weighed in on the issue, warning South African President Ramaphosa against the deal.
- The possibility of the issue of the alleged arms delivery is threatening the position of South Africa under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which would be a significant development.
- The transponder of the lady R vessel was turned off for several days and the ship was secretly loading while moored in Cape Town, the Financial Times states, following its own investigation.
- The UN Committee Against Torture “deplores the inadequacy of the investigations and proceedings aimed at identifying and prosecuting perpetrators” of crimes that may amount to war crimes and/or crimes against humanity committed during the Tigray war, states an advance version of their report.
- The state of emergency declared in the context of the war was excessively broad and allowed for the mass arrest and detention of Tigrayans outside of Tigray, states the Committee.
- The “deaths, displacement, trafficking, disappearances and refoulement” of Eritrean refugees during the conflict is of particular concern to the Committee.
- An IGAD meeting proposed by Kenyan President William Ruto on 12 May was postponed to 12 June.

Links of interest

[Sudan: Clashes between SAF and RSF - Flash Update No. 12 \(14 May 2023\) \[EN/AR\]](#)

[Sudanese airspace to remain closed to all traffic until May 31](#)

[Twitter: Netblocks](#)

[Worshippers hurt in Sudan church attack, combatants say](#)

[Sudan violence forces at least 450,000 children to flee their homes](#)

[Diabetics fleeing Sudan struggle to keep their insulin safe in 40C heat](#)

[News: Election Board declines to restore TPLF's legal registration as political party](#)

[Lack of forex to import fertilizer threatens agricultural output](#)

[IMF: Ethiopia's Debt Restructuring Contingent on Creditor Assurance](#)

[Flooding in Somalia displaces 200,000 people: official](#)

[Tracking Lady R: the covert voyage that allegedly took South African arms to Russia](#)

[SA to investigate U.S. charge of weapons transfer to Russia](#)

Disclaimer: All information in this Situation Report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eeпа.be any additional information and corrections.