

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Situation in Sudan (per 19 May)

- Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Sovereign Council and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) leader, issued a decree removing Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commander, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), from his position as deputy of the council, appointing Malik Agar in his stead.
- There is currently a ban stopping foreigners from entering the country, including journalists and humanitarian workers.
- The SAF are not achieving desired military outcomes, to some extent due to a large hostage-taking by the RSF in the first days of fighting.
- These hostages have been spread around the RSF locations in Khartoum, making the SAF more reluctant to strike against key RSF positions.
- The SAF is increasingly reliant on irregular/militia forces to make up for its infantry deficiencies.
- Whilst Burhan remains the official head of the SAF, he has little control over the Armed Forces. This comes as the Sudanese Islamic Movement (SIM) is starting to see him as a political liability.
- Burhan's lack of control within the SAF became clear when he was forced to remove his ally and relative, Anan Hamid Muhammad Omar, as Minister of Interior.
- Burhan has been deemed as too accommodating towards Hemedti, due to his involvement in the Jeddah talks.
- Burhan's stance to restrict Islamic influence within the coup authority in the past year has also led to resentment from the SIM.
- Islamists have infiltrated the SAF at extremely high levels, with the Military Intelligence Services and the General Intelligence Services remaining Islamist strongholds.
- Despite this, it is important that the SAF continues to be engaged in ceasefire negotiations, and international pressure on the SAF should be equally exerted on the SIM, observers note.
- The communications between the SAF and Islamist leaders outside of Sudan should be monitored, as well as the movements of Islamist militias engaged in the conflict, state observers.
- Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the South Sudanese government's decision to grant permission to the adviser of the leader of the RSF militias to visit Juba and hold a press conference in the presence of senior officials from the Government of the Republic of South Sudan.
- Cases of rapes perpetrated by RSF soldiers, and on one instance a SAF soldier, have been reported by women across Sudan. They were first primarily targeting foreign women, but attacks against Sudanese women are now widespread.
- Refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) are especially vulnerable, with 6 cases of refugee women reported. The real number of cases is undoubtedly much higher.
- In April, 24 women and girls were abducted and raped from an IDP camp in Otash, South Darfur.
- In South Khartoum, 30 cases of rape were reported. Nyala appears to be generally safer. From el-Geneina looting, kidnapping, fighting and sexual assault is reported.

- The reports include cruel behaviour targeting women across the country, in which they are subjected to brutal acts of sexual violence, including cases perpetrated in front of family members.
- Proper care and treatment for the victims of sexual violence is difficult due to shortages of appropriate medical supplies.
- Three activists of Sudan's pro-democracy movement were arrested by the Sudanese security forces. Though the reason for arrest is not yet clear, it is speculated that it is part of a broader campaign by the SAF to consolidate control over aid relief.
- Hospitals in Sudan are being occupied, looted and emptied of supplies by armed forces.
- A panel discussion organised by Chatham House on the war in Sudan and the scenarios for its evolution and resolution will be taking place on 23 May at 17:30 CAT/CEST.

Refugee Situation (per 19 May)

- So far 23,000 refugees fleeing Sudan have passed through Metema, Ethiopia, with 800 arriving every day. They are nationals from 66 countries.
- Many of the refugees are from Eritrea, Syria or Sudan.
- The refugees arriving in Metema lack drinking water and support. Especially those that were already refugees in Sudan lack travelling documents and are not able to travel further from Metema. They also cannot register with the humanitarian aid coordination office.
- Many Sudanese citizens did not flee with their passports, and are stuck at the border.
- The security situation is tense in countries neighbouring Sudan.
- Flooding in Somalia has displaced 250,000 people. The Beledweyne river has never flooded to such an extent before.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 19 May)

- EU Ambassador to Ethiopia Roland Kobia met with Tigray Interim Administration, visited IDP camp in Shire and held discussions with representatives of Adigrat University during his 3-day visit to Tigray.
- A cholera outbreak is further spreading to Sidama region and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's region, exposing about 7 million people to risk of infection, states UN OCHA.

International Situation (per 19 May)

- Organisations are calling for support from UN Human Rights Council delegations in the development and adoption of a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea for one year.
- The letter signed by 35 NGOs urged for the production of a substantive assessment of Eritrea's human rights situation instead of a business as usual approach, and the adoption of meaningful resolutions on the country.
- The letter points out that Eritrean authorities continue to commit grave and widespread human rights abuses inside and outside Eritrea with impunity.
- Some issues of concern that were mentioned include arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, and (forced) conscriptions into Eritrea's indefinite national service.

Links of interest

[Sudan's Burhan relieves Hemedti from role as deputy chief of Sovereign Council](#)

[Women speak out about sexual violence in Sudan fighting](#)

[Three pro-democracy activists arrested in Sudan](#)

[Life-saving equipment looted from hospitals in Sudan](#)

[War in Sudan: Perspectives and prospects for resolution](#)

[IOM Ethiopia's response plan to the Sudan crisis](#)

['No one saw this level of devastation coming': climate crisis worsens in Somalia](#)

[Twitter: Tigray Television](#)

[Eritrea: The annual Council resolution should outline the country's human rights situation and extend the Special Rapporteur's mandate](#)

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