

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Situation in Eritrea (per 26 October)

- Human rights violations committed by Eritrea and its ruling regime continue to occur inside the country as well as in regional and international contexts, according to speakers at the European Parliament Roundtable on Eritrea on Wednesday.
- The Roundtable on Eritrea was hosted by Member of the European Parliament, Katrin Langensiepen, member of Greens/EFA group, with 11 presenters speaking in different capacities.
- MEP Langensiepen welcomed the timely debate on ongoing human rights concerns with a need to bring the matters to the European agenda.
- “The continued presence of the Eritrean Defence forces in disputed areas in Ethiopia, as well as the presence of a large contingent of Eritrean Defence Forces alongside the Eritrean – Ethiopian border is of great concern”, said Dr. Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea in his statement.
- According to Dr Babiker, the Eritrean authorities have “effectively have raided the country, conducting round ups and conscripting thousands of Eritreans into the military.
- Dr Babiker attributes the clashes in the Eritrean diaspora to the complete lack of civic space in Eritrea.
- Vulnerable populations, including women, children and elderly, have been at the centre of attacks by Eritrean troops during the two-year war in Tigray. Sexual violence against women committed on a large scale across Tigray has been used as weapon of war, said Kokob Gebru Kidanu of Mekelle University.
- EU member states are directly co-financing the programmes in Eritrea which employ people who are subjected to the indefinite national service. A financial agreement to boost coastal and inland fisheries in Eritrea has been co-financed by Germany since 2016, stated Dr Sara Arapiles.
- The influence of “a long arm of the regime” is active within many countries across Europe, often carried out by the regime supporters within the Eritrean diaspora, speakers stated.
- “Many of the Eritrean refugees traumatized by the regime's cruelty and oppression, feel extremely shocked and provoked to see that regime in Eritrea is using Europe as platform to exercise its power”, said Beyene Gerezgiher, spokesperson for the Eritrean Bright Future Movement.

Situation in Ethiopia/Eritrea (per 26 October)

- A potential regional spread of the war between Israel and Hamas may distract international powers and allow either Ethiopia or Eritrea to take action against the other, observers warn, although they do not believe that war is imminent. They note several factors in play.
- The Ethiopian government has credible information of Eritrea’s silent support to the Fano militia in Amhara, with arms and ammunition going through Western Tigray and Sudan, observers state. This makes Ethiopia unable to definitively weaken Fano.
- The Ethiopian government is under pressure from the Tigray Interim Administration to deliver on the promises in the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) Agreement in relation to Western Tigray.

- The economic situation in Ethiopia is adding to the pressure, as the government is running out of hard currency reserves and has major debts due at the end of the year; donors are insisting that the CoH Agreement should be fully implemented before considering further loans and debt rescheduling.
- The Ethiopian government is also procuring weapons and receiving deliveries from the UAE.
- Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki struggles to keep his over 100.000 forces busy and away from the capital of Asmara, as there are signs of internal disagreement over Isaias's handling of regional politics.
- Externally, the Eritrean diaspora is also increasingly moving away from supporting the Eritrean government, observers note.

Situation in Sudan (per 26 October)

- Peace talks between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) resumed today in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- The talks are taking place in the presence of representatives from the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and are led by Kenya.
- The RSF claim to have taken over the city of Nyala in South Darfur. RSF state they have overrun the main SAF base in the city. Apparent videos of RSF soldiers celebrating are circulating on social media.
- Medical staff at the Italian hospital in Nyala were detained and abused by RSF over allegations that they treated SAF soldiers, unconfirmed reports state.
- The capital of Central Darfur, Zalengei, is also under RSF control. Fighting over the capital of North Darfur, El Fasher, continues. At least 1,500 people have been displaced from Zalengei since the renewed fighting started on 19 October.
- The areas are currently inaccessible to humanitarian actors, reports IOM.
- Clashes are also reported in North Kordofan. At least two people were killed when RSF attacked Wad Ashana village in the Um Rawaba locality.

Situation in Tigray (per 26 October)

- Banking services have not been reinstated in Irob, the northeastern part of Tigray, since their disruption during the war. There are several areas in Irob which are still occupied and controlled by Eritrean forces.
- The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Lion International Bank, and Dedebit Microfinance Institution, which have been previously operating in Irob, were not able to resume services.

Regional Situation (per 26 October)

- "Ethiopia will not assert its interests through war", said Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed today. The statement comes days after he warned that Ethiopia has rightful claims to access the Red Sea, which caused concerns over regional stability.
- Ethiopia and Egypt held a third round of negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Cairo on Tuesday. Despite reported progress in negotiations, there was no conclusive agreement reached.
- Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, and Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, agreed to finalize their talks in four months in Addis Ababa.
- UN Women together with IGAD and AU organised a peace building initiative in consultation with 400 Sudanese women peacebuilders, calling for immediate ceasefire and reinstatement of peace in Sudan.

Links of interest

[European Parliament Roundtable on Eritrea](#)

[Red Sea: Ethiopia "will not assert its interests through war", assures Abiy Ahmed](#)

[Sudan warring sides resume peace talks in Saudi Arabia](#)

[Sudan Humanitarian Update \(26 October 2023\)](#)

[Sudan opposition forces say they have seized country's second-largest city](#)

[Banking services remain absent in war-torn Irob, Tigray region despite peace deal](#)

[Third round GERD talks conclude in Cairo without outcome: Addis to hold next round](#)

[Sudanese women advocate for peace at conference in Uganda](#)

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