

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

## No. 498 - 20 November 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 20 November)

- Tensions are rising in El Daein, the capital of the East Darfur region, which has so far escaped the worst of the fighting thanks to a local agreement. A mediation committee of civil leaders, youth leaders, and Chamber of Commerce representatives is trying to avert conflict in the city.
- RSF has told the committee that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) should either join the RSF, withdraw, or enter into a military confrontation.
- El Daein has become a hub for the selling of goods looted from Khartoum and other cities, reports Sudan Tribune.
- Concerns remain over the apparent impending RSF attack on El Fasher, capital of North Darfur. Observers warn that an RSF attack on El Fasher is a red line for Darfur movements, which is likely to lead to conflict between Arab and non-Arab communities, with a high risk of spilling over into Chad.
- Some of the Juba Peace Agreement armed movement signatories have decided to end their neutrality in order to join SAF in defence of El Fasher, referring to the alleged human rights abuses of the RSF and the risk of disintegration of Sudan.
- SAF soldiers who fled from the Ardamata neighbourhood in West Darfur after an attack by the RSF said that they were abandoned without support and supplies by SAF.
- The soldiers state they ran out of weapons and supplies, leaving them ill equipped to hold off the RSF assault, who attacked with artillery and drones. The forces withdrew to Chad, while RSF massacred at least 1,300 people in Ardamata.
- More details are coming out in relation to the Ardamata massacre at the beginning of November, including of civilians summarily executed, burned alive, and subjected to sexual violence.
- In the IDP camps Ardamata and Dorti, inhabited mostly by the Masalit, RSF and allied militia tortured people, executed many, and left their bodies on the streets. They also looted property.
- Hundreds of civilians were taken to RSF-run detention camps and their fates are unknown.
- 32 people, including civilians and a UN Peacekeeper, died in attacks in the disputed region of Abyei. The attacks were reportedly perpetrated by armed militia wearing South Sudanese army uniforms.
- Conflict in Sudan has stopped negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan over the disputed region.
- Al-Gony Dagalo, the brother of Hemedti, was reportedly in Rome, Italy, for meetings in October.

### Situation in Ethiopia (per 20 November)

- Ethiopia has reportedly ordered several new Bayraktar AKINCI, a highly advanced unmanned combat drone, from Turkey, states Defence Turk.
- Turkish drone manufacturer Baykar released footage of the 6<sup>th</sup> test flight of the Bayraktar TB3, and one shot in the video shows the Ethiopian flag on a Bayraktar AKINCI with the serial tail number S40.
- Deals have been made with eight countries, including Ethiopia, for the sale of this drone. Sources state it cost the Ethiopian government 100 million USD per piece.
- The drone is said to have a high payload capacity and advanced systems, and is said to be able to launch an air-launched cruise missile.

- A UN Human Rights Office spokesperson expressed concern over the “devastating impact of drone strikes” in the Amhara region, where strikes have killed civilians.
- The Ethiopian government has started using Pegasus spyware for surveillance purposes, sources state. The spyware is designed by Israeli cyber-arms company NSO Group to secretly run on mobile phones.

### **Situation in Tigray (per 20 November)**

- Tigray authorities are receiving increasing reports of Tigrayan youth fleeing to the Arabian peninsula to escape food insecurity and lack of jobs. The youth flee via the route through the Afar region and Djibouti, where they make the extremely dangerous sea crossing to Yemen.
- Families of youth are receiving ransom demands of up to 1 million birr [approx. €16.000,-] from human traffickers who operate particularly in Yemen.
- The Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs (ARRA) has reinstated the protection for Eritrean refugees in Tigray.

### **Situation in Eritrea (per 20 November)**

- Eritrean media Tesfanews published a piece accusing the United Arab Emirates of trying to get access to the Red Sea region through stoking conflict in Sudan and Ethiopia.
- This is connected to the statements by Ethiopian PM Abiy on Ethiopia's right to access the Red Sea, which could potentially cause a bloody conflict in which Eritrea is “fully supported by Saudi, and Egypt”.

### **Regional Situation (per 20 November)**

- Russia is looking to mediate in relation to the tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia, sources state.

### **International Situation (per 20 November)**

- The US is reportedly preparing a next round of sanctions towards the RSF and Islamists close to the SAF.
- 345 alleged incidents of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law affecting 2,672 victims were recorded by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) in its report to the UN Security Council for this reporting period.
- Of the incidents, 38 were reportedly attributable to SAF, 160 to the RSF, and 102 to both.
- Conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, also increased over the reporting period.
- The UN confirmed it received a letter from Sudan to terminate UNITAMS with immediate effect.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Algerian diplomat Ramtane Lamamra as his Personal Envoy for Sudan.
- A Troika statement by Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States condemns the escalating violence in Sudan and calls for the parties to uphold humanitarian commitments made on 7 November.
- An incident was reported in The Netherlands, of a case of allegedly open intimidation towards a victim of the Eritrean human trafficker Walid. Previously Walid had ordered action against witnesses of the prosecution, after which he was moved to a high security prison in The Netherlands.

### **Links of interest**

[Civilians flee East Darfur capital as tensions raise between army and RSF](#)

[Jérôme Tubiana: «Le conflit au Darfour peut provoquer une extension à l'intérieur du Tchad»](#)

[Sudanese soldiers who fled Ardamata say army leadership abandoned them](#)

[Sudan: Killings in Ardamata](#)

[32 dead in attacks in disputed region between Sudan and South Sudan](#)

[Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Martha Ama A. Pobee's Remarks to the Security Council on Sudan](#)

[Etiyopya'ya ihraç edilen AKINCI TİHA görüntülendi](#)

[Ethiopia: Violence in Amhara region](#)

[News: Rising number of Tigray youth fleeing to the Arabian Peninsula amid food security challenges, limited job prospects](#)

[Eritrea accuses UAE of stoking war with Ethiopia, appeals to Saudis to intervene](#)

[Hemeti's youngest brother emerges from shadows in bid for RSF prominence](#)

[Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan](#)

[Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General](#)

[Troika Joint Statement on Attacks in Darfur, Sudan and the Need for a Cessation of Violence](#)

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