

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

No. 507 - 8 January 2024

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Situation in Sudan (per 8 January)

- Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan rejected a proposal for a ceasefire made by civilian groups. This is because of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in West Darfur and other areas of Sudan, al-Burhan states.
- The ceasefire deal proposed by the Taqadum civilian coalition, led by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, was signed by RSF leader Hemedti in Addis Ababa last week Tuesday, contingent on the SAF signing the deal as well.
- The rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Omdurman is leading to starvation, neighbourhood committees and individuals warn.
- The residents are suffering from the shutdown of water and electricity and extreme shortage of food, medicine and healthcare due to fighting and siege of certain neighbourhoods by RSF forces.
- The humanitarian situation is also worsening in other parts of Sudan, including in Darfur and Kordofan.
- The humanitarian response is hindered by insecurity, looting, bureaucratic hurdles, poor network and phone connectivity, lack of cash, and limited technical and humanitarian staff. Only 40% of the 2023 humanitarian plan was funded.
- The number of displaced people due to the Sudan conflict has increased by around 500,000 in a single month, due to the spread of conflict to the al Jazira state and other areas, states UNOCHA. The total of internally and externally displaced people is now 7.3 million.
- The spread of conflict to essential agricultural areas causes further disruption to harvests.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 8 January)

- Fano militia clashed with Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) in Debre Berhan, Amhara Region, as well as in Gondar. Observers say Fano is eroding the administrative and security structure in Amhara.
- Ethiopia defaulted in late December 2023 as the grace period expired on a \$33 million interest payment on its Eurobond. Fitch Ratings downgraded Ethiopia's credit rating to "restricted default" (RD).

Situation in Tigray (per 8 January)

- 91% of Tigray inhabitants are exposed to the risk of starvation, according to a statement from President of the Tigray Interim Administration, Getachew Reda. The situation is deteriorating due to the aftermath of the Tigray war and locust infestations.
- The administration calls on the Ethiopian federal government and the international community to intervene.

Situation in Eritrea (per 8 January)

- The prison population in Eritrea has increased even further in the last three years, according to the Washington Post, due to the imprisonment of those evading the draft for the war in Tigray.
- Interviews with 42 people imprisoned in Eritrea, some until very recently, revealed that starvation, torture, and inhumane conditions continue to be the norm. Prisoners are held without charges and are not allowed to see their families.

Regional Situation (per 8 January)

- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the President of Somaliland Muse Bihe Abdi have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Addis Ababa on 1 January 2024. The MoU is a framework for cooperation and partnership between Ethiopia and Somaliland.
- The MoU reportedly includes a pathway for Ethiopian access to the sea and leasing a military base at the Red Sea. In return, Ethiopia will reportedly work towards recognising Somaliland as independent and give Somaliland a stake in Ethiopian Airlines. The full text of the MoU has not been made public.
- The sea access would involve 20 km of sea access for Ethiopian naval forces for a period of 50 years, according to a statement by the Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Although Somaliland declared itself independent in 1991, Ethiopia would be the first African country to recognise its independence.
- The Somali government stated that the MoU violated its sovereignty as "Somaliland is part of Somalia under the Somali constitution". The Somali government withdrew its ambassador to Ethiopia.
- Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud signed a law on Saturday in order to nullify the MoU.
- Mohamud is visiting Asmara, Eritrea, today for a meeting with Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki.
- Kenyan President William Ruto met with RSF leader Hemedti on Wednesday last week to discuss the conflict in Sudan.
- The visit was condemned by Sudan's acting foreign minister, who responded by recalling Sudan's envoy to Kenya in protest of the official reception of Hemedti, and failing to acknowledge the abuses committed by RSF.
- Other stops on Hemedti's tour included meetings with the Presidents of South Africa and Djibouti, and Ethiopia's deputy prime minister and foreign minister Demeke Mekonnen.
- Presidential elections were held in Puntland, Somalia, today. President Abdullahi Deni was re-elected.

International Situation (per 8 January)

- Clashes with police broke out at a London new year's event overseen and attended by the Eritrean embassy. Around 50 pro-democracy protesters clashed with police.
- Pro-democracy Eritreans apologised for the clashes with the police. They had tried beforehand to have the event cancelled due to its links with the government in Eritrea.
- According to pro-democracy Eritreans, some protesters made it into the hall where speeches were given calling on the Eritrean diaspora to prepare and raise funds for a new war with Ethiopia.
- The protesters disrupted the proceedings, leading to two of them being injured.
- The protesters say the police intervened upon them while exiting the venue, and stated the event would be ended; however, this did not happen, they state. Protesters then clashed with the police, who used tasers and tear gas.

Links of interest

- [Sudan's army chief al-Burhan says 'no reconciliation' with paramilitary RSF](#)
- [Sudan: RSF open to talks on immediate ceasefire with army](#)
- [Sudanese dying of thirst and hunger in Omdurman](#)
- [Sudan Humanitarian Update \(4 January 2024\)](#)
- [Sudan Crisis: Assessment of hard-to-reach areas in Zalingi, Central Darfur \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Ethiopia defaults on sovereign debt after deadline expires on \\$33mn payment](#)
- [Ethiopian Office of the Prime Minister on X](#)
- [Northern Ethiopia facing famine, says Tigray official](#)
- [An African gulag so ghastly that inmates risk death to escape](#)
- [Somalia recalls envoy to Ethiopia over 'null and void' Somaliland port deal](#)
- [Somalia president signs law nullifying Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal](#)
- [The Somaliland – Ethiopia deal: ending a crisis or beginning another?](#)
- [የሰማሊያ ፕሬዝዳንት ለዩ.ኤ.ዲ. የሥራ ጉብኝት ወደ ኢሥመራ አቀኑ](#)
- [Kenya president meets Sudan's paramilitary chief, calls for lasting peace in war-torn country](#)
- [Sudan recalls Kenya envoy in protest after Ruto's meeting with Hemedti](#)
- [How Eritrean sectarianism arrived on Britain's streets](#)
- [Clash in London as Eritrean government warns supporters abroad to prepare for war with Ethiopia](#)

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