

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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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.

Information on merging Thursday's Situation Report with the News Highlights: The EEPA team will extend the information that is being published in Thursday's Situation Reports with the topics that have been covered by EEPA [Weekly News Highlights](#). Therefore, from next Thursday, 25 January, the situation reports will include in topics such as migration trends and developments and human trafficking and smuggling issues along the Central Mediterranean route, as well as migration governance issues, in addition to its regular content.

Regional Situation (per 18 January)

- Somalia rejects mediation over the dispute with Ethiopia until Ethiopia withdraws from Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Somaliland, according to a press statement by the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- An Ethiopian Airlines aircraft heading to Hargeisa city in Somaliland was denied entry to Somali airspace by the Somali Civil Aviation Authority on Wednesday. The aircraft was reportedly carrying a high-level Ethiopian delegation.
- Due to the lack of authorisation for landing in Hargeisa by Somali authorities, the aircraft was redirected and returned to Addis Ababa.
- The 42nd Extraordinary Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is taking place today in Kampala, Uganda. Topics such as the Sudan peace mediation and the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland are included on the agenda.
- The summit is taking place without participation of the Sudanese and Ethiopian delegations.
- Sudan suspended its engagement over peace mediation efforts with IGAD on Tuesday. Last week, IGAD invited Mohamed Hamdan Daglo (Hemedti), chief of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), to the summit. Hemedti confirmed his presence at the Summit.
- Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is loyal to Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, chief of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), stated that IGAD violated Sudan's sovereignty by adding Sudan on the agenda of the IGAD meeting and inviting Hemedti to the summit without any consultation.
- The Sudanese anti-war coalition, the Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Taquadum), confirmed the presence of their delegation at the IGAD summit.
- The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that Ethiopia will not be participating in the IGAD meeting in Kampala due to previously scheduled commitments that overlap with the summit.
- Vice-president of the Sudanese Sovereign Council, Malik Agar, travelled to Eritrea for a bilateral visit with Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki on Wednesday.

International Situation (per 18 January)

- The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) held a discussion on the escalating situation between Somalia and Ethiopia on Wednesday. The AU PSC urged both countries "to exercise restraint, de-escalate and engage in meaningful dialogue toward finding a peaceful resolution of the matter".
- The Arab League (AL) denounced the Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU during an extraordinary meeting held on Wednesday. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, AL Secretary General, called it "a clear violation of international law".

- The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected the statements of the AL calling them “unacceptable”, said Addis Standard. Somaliland also rejected the statement by the Arab League.
- The US denounced the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland, claiming that Somalia’s territorial integrity must be supported.
- The MoU may threaten the counterterrorism endeavours in the fight against Al-Shabaab and may lead to instability, according to John Kirby, coordinator of strategic communications for the US National Security Council.
- US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mike Hammer, is travelling to Kampala, Uganda and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 17 and 24 January. He is scheduled to attend the IGAD summit.
- Hammer will discuss peace mediation efforts on Sudan as well as implementation of Cessation Hostilities Agreement in the Tigray region.
- The AU Commission appointed a high-level panel to facilitate the peace mediation process in Sudan.

Refugee Situation (per 18 January)

- 7.7 million people have been displaced since the start of the conflict in Sudan in April 2023 with 6 million displaced internally and 1.7 million crossing borders, according to the new statistics by the IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix.
- IOM Director General, Amy Pope, urged the international community to ramp up the funding for 2024 and not turn the back “on the suffering of millions of people affected by such devastating conflict”. IOM launched an appeal for \$307 million in support of affected communities.
- Refugees fleeing the Sudan conflict are dying during their attempt to cross into Egypt through the Sahara Desert.
- Over 378.000 people are known to have arrived from Sudan, according to UNHCR. Most of the refugees are using smuggling networks to enter Egypt through dangerous routes as the visa application process for asylum seekers takes at least two months.

Situation in Tigray (per 18 January)

- The Tigray Industry Bureau has called for assistance from the federal government to help with reviving the manufacturing sector which suffered losses due to COVID-19 pandemic and two-year war.
- 139 industries could be restored promptly if they receive attention as identified by the bureau. The federal government has not yet attended to the request by the bureau.

Situation in Sudan (per 18 January)

- Fighting between RSF and SAF is approaching a UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Naqa and Musawwarat es-Sufra, located in the Nile province of Sudan, warned the Regional Network for Cultural Rights. The remains of the ancient Kingdom of Kush is a complex of historical pyramids, temples and dwellings.
- Al-Burhan and Hemedti must stop fighting in order to terminate the “endless cycle of violence” in Sudan, urged Radhouane Nouicer, UN expert on human rights in Sudan.

Links of interest

- [Somalia rejects mediation with Ethiopia gov’t over Somaliland port deal](#)
- [Sudan suspends contacts with IGAD mediating group: Foreign Ministry](#)
- [Sudan’s anti-war coalition to participate in IGAD Summit](#)
- [News: Ethiopia declines to attend upcoming IGAD summit due to ‘overlapping schedule’](#)
- [African Union Urges Restraint Over Ethiopia-Somaliland Deal](#)
- [News: Ethiopia “categorically rejects” Arab League statement over maritime deal with Somaliland](#)
- [White House concerned over Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement](#)
- [Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Hammer Travels to Uganda and Ethiopia](#)
- [AU appoints high-level panel to help Sudan restore peace and stability](#)
- [IOM Chief: International Community Must Not Turn Its Back on World’s Largest Displacement in Sudan](#)
- [DTM Sudan Weekly Displacement Snapshot 17](#)
- [‘Several’ Sudanese die crossing border into Egypt](#)
- [News: Tigray’s industries grapple with losses, await gov’t response](#)
- [Sudan’s war sees fighting in World Heritage Sites of Naqa, Musawwarat es-Sufra](#)
- [UN human rights expert on Sudan calls for urgent action on dismal human rights situation as conflict enters 10th month](#)

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