

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 516 - 8 February 2024

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 8 February)

- The UN Security Council Panel of Experts of Sudan has compiled a report on the devastating attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Darfur, naming key individuals among the RSF and allies that oversaw the abuses.
- Abdel Rahman Joma'a, the West Darfur RSF commander, is listed as one of the figures present in El Geneina between April and June 2023, when large-scale abuses took place.
- He was also present in Ardamata where the RSF destroyed an IDP camp, where hundreds of citizens were killed and unlawfully detained.
- The United Arab Emirates was also mentioned in relation to shipping arms and ammunition to the RSF via Chad, violating the arms embargo.
- Sudan experienced an internet blackout on Wednesday as the three main operators went offline, blocking communication and access to online banking. MTN Sudan and Sudani were already offline since Friday.
- The RSF has denied being responsible for the internet blackout, instead blaming the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) for bombing critical infrastructure, including telecommunications companies' towers.
- The warring parties in Sudan have agreed to participate in UN-mediated talks on enabling the delivery of humanitarian aid, according to Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Switzerland is being considered to host the talks.
- A joint committee in Sudan was formed to secure mining areas so that mining operations can resume. The committee consists of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and several security agencies.
- The war in Sudan has displaced close to 1.4 million people to the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile region, which are controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The influx of IDPs has increased the population size in the region to 3.5 million people.
- Crop failures related to lack of rainfall and locust infestations in that region mean that the population of 3.5 million people are facing dire humanitarian conditions. SPLM-North has appealed to the UN for aid, but permission by the Sudanese Commission for Humanitarian Affairs still needs to be acquired.
- IDPs in South Darfur are continually abused by the RSF, experiencing rape, assault and looting, displaced people state.

Refugee Situation (per 8 February)

- The district court of Jerusalem, Israel, blocked the pending deportation of Ethiopian asylum seekers.
- The court has granted a temporary injunction, freezing the Interior's Minister decision to remove group protection for deportation from Ethiopian citizens pending further decision.
- The Court responded to an appeal by the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, who argued that the decisions of the Interior Minister contradict information from sources describing Ethiopia's security, political and humanitarian situation as extremely precarious.

Situation in Eritrea (per 8 February)

- Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has returned to Eritrea following a 12-day visit to Italy.
- Isaias and his delegation held extensive discussions with Italian officials as well as various companies regarding investments and transfers of technology, according to Eritrean officials.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 8 February)

- Temesgen Tiruneh, the former director general of National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), has been appointed as deputy prime minister of Ethiopia.
- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stated that he does not think Somalia wants to engage in war with Ethiopia, although third parties might want to incite a proxy conflict. He further stated that Ethiopia would not invade anyone, but if others were to come to Ethiopia, Ethiopia would protect itself.
- A group of women-led civil society organisations (CSO) called for including women in dialogues, negotiations, and decisions that impact the future of Ethiopia, stating that women are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.
- The group of women-led CSOs further urged for the resumption of negotiations between the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Ethiopian government.

Situation in Tigray (per 8 February)

- The Interim Administration of Tigray announced that it does not agree to hold a referendum on the status of Western Tigray.
- A Canadian exploration company of metal and gold, Sun Peak Metals, will resume operations in Shire. They had suspended operations due to security risks related to the war.

International Situation (per 8 February)

- The UN has appealed for \$4.1 billion to meet humanitarian needs aid in Sudan and for refugees fleeing Sudan, urging countries not to forget about the civilians trapped in the war.

Migration Situation (per 8 February)

- A boat with 42 Sudanese refugees capsized off the coast of Tunisia. 13 people were found dead and 27 are still missing. Two people survived. The boat was made of scrap metal quickly welded together.
- Stopping migration to the EU is impossible, according to Hans Leijten, the head of the EU border agency Frontex. He further stated that it is unlikely that migration will decrease over the following years.
- The Atlantic route, from the West African shore to Spanish Islands, is currently the most active route, sources state. In January, 7,270 people were smuggled across this route, compared to 566 in January 2023.
- The head of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez are meeting the president of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, to discuss migration, security and stability in the Sahel region. The meeting will include signing several agreements.
- The EU is reportedly preparing €200 million in aid for Mauritania to stop refugee boats from leaving its shores and to support refugees and migrants in the country.

Links of interest

[UN Security Council Should Act Against Abusers in Sudan](#)

[Network blackout cuts communications for millions in war-torn Sudan](#)

[RSF denies being behind communication blackout in Sudan](#)

[South Kordofan: 3.5m Sudanese face 'extreme hunger'](#)

[South Darfur displaced 'terrorised by RSF-linked militias'](#)

[Tefanews on X](#)

[Breaking: Intelligence chief Temesgen Tiruneh appointed deputy prime minister](#)

[News: Abiy moves to dispel tension with Somalia, blames other forces' intent to 'incite conflict'](#)

[News: Women-led civil societies in Ethiopia call for sustained dialogue with armed groups, inclusion of women in peace talks](#)

[The Tigray region announced that it did not agree to resolve the dispute with the scope of administration](#)

[News: Sun Peak Metals set to resume exploration at Shire project site](#)

[UN warns of 'epic suffering' in Sudan and appeals for \\$4bn in aid](#)

[Exclusive: EU border agency says stopping migration is impossible](#)

[Spain and EU to sign migration deal with Mauritania as people-smuggling rises](#)

[Tunisia says 13 migrants from Sudan killed, 27 missing after boat made of scrap metal sinks off coast](#)

Disclaimer: All information in this Situation Report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eepea.be any additional information and corrections.