

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 518 - 15 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 15 February)

- Over 3,000 people fled the town of Habila in South Kordofan since Friday last week, after the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) reportedly launched an attack to regain control over the town; The town administration has been taken over by the Rapid Support Forces since 4 January.
- Diseases, hunger, low immunisation and malnutrition are causing an alarming situation leading to higher mortality rates, stated Peter Graaff, acting representative of the UN World Health Organization (WHO) in Sudan.
- The El Sudani telecommunication network as well as the Sudatel terrestrial fibre optic network have been reportedly restored in several localities across Sudan. Restoring the communication services allowed for banks to resume their operations and open access to online banking services.
- Zain and MTN communication networks continue to be shut down.

Refugee Situation (per 15 February)

- Human smugglers with connections to police officials in Sudan and Egypt are arranging cross-border transport of refugees fleeing from conflict in Sudan. Due to restricted legal routes to enter Egypt, refugees are seeking services of smugglers, paying hundreds of USD.
- Around 300 refugees arrive daily in Egypt, said Elene Panova, UN Resident Coordinator in Egypt.
- The real numbers are likely to be larger due to the influx of refugees through unofficial channels that are unaccounted for.
- Chad is the neighbouring country most affected by conflict in Sudan, currently hosting almost 40 percent of refugees fleeing the conflict, reports the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 15 February)

- At least 45 civilian extrajudicial executions carried out by the government security forces were reported in Gojjam zone, Amhara region, in a recent period, confirms a preliminary report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).
- The Ethiopian government denied the extrajudicial killing of civilians, stating that the reported clashes were between the federal forces and Fano militia during which federal forces exercised their right of self-defence without targeting any civilians.
- 2.4 million farmers and IDPs are in need of food aid in Amhara, according to the Amhara Regional State's Disaster Prevention and Food Security Commission.

Situation in Tigray (per 15 February)

- During the mutual meeting last week, Tigray Interim Regional Administration (IRA) reportedly briefed the federal government about pending and unresolved issues such as the legal status of the TPLF, presence of foreign forces on Tigray territory, as well as unresolved status of Western Tigray.
- IRA underscored that resolving the issue of Western Tigray through a referendum as proposed by the federal government is not feasible due to the ongoing displacement of Tigray population.
- A follow up meeting between IRA and federal government representatives is scheduled for March.

Regional Situation (per 15 February)

- Ethiopians in Somalia face verbal and physical violence since Ethiopia signed a controversial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland in January. In an attack claimed by Al-Shabaab on 5 February, 6 out of 7 casualties were of Ethiopian origin with an additional 6 Ethiopians injured.
- The anti-Ethiopian sentiment is also affecting refugees in Somalia who are witnessing threats and marginalisation by the host communities.
- Somaliland rejected criticism of Somalia regarding the MoU with Ethiopia adding that the MoU is an expression of mutual respect between two independent nations.
- Somalia in a response called on the African Union and the United Nations to denounce the MoU.

International Situation (per 15 February)

- The committees on Foreign Affairs, Development and subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament held a joint discussion on the current situation in Ethiopia amid the ongoing tensions in the country as well as the Horn of Africa region.
- Dr. Sarah Vaughan, researcher and expert on Ethiopia and Horn of Africa, highlighted the current instability, domestic political tensions, erosion of state delivery capacity, unresolved domestic conflicts in at least 3 regions of Ethiopia - Amhara, Tigray and Oromia, as well as return of famine and starvation.
- Frederick Lee-Ohlsson, WFP representative, briefed the joint committee on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia underlying the need for resilience building programs to break the cycle of food insecurity.
- On Tuesday, 27 February at 9.30am CET, at the court in Zwolle, The Netherlands, a follow-up hearing will be held on the case of the alleged Eritrean human trafficker Tewolde G., known as Walid.

Migration Situation (per 15 February)

- Frontex shared coordinates of boats carrying migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean sea to the Libyan coast guard more than 2,000 times between 2021 and 2023, reveals evidence obtained by the German magazine Der Spiegel and Lighthouse Reports.
- Coordinates of boats were shared despite Frontex having knowledge of physical abuse, beating of and shooting at refugees by the Libyan coast guard.
- 442 migrants and refugees were intercepted in the Mediterranean sea and returned to Libya between 4 to 10 February, said the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).
- The European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs endorsed a new legal framework for the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum yesterday.
- Ahead of the vote, civil society organisations called on the committee to vote against the migration pact as it may bring "devastating implications for the right to international protection in the bloc and greenlights abuses across Europe including racial profiling, default *de facto* detention and pushbacks".
- The migration pact is now pending a formal approval of the European Parliament plenary session, followed by the final endorsement from the Council.

Links of interest

- [Civilians suffer as 'perfect storm' of war, disease and displacement grips Sudan](#)
- [Thousands flee fierce fighting in South Kordofan](#)
- [Communications blackout: El Sudani network restored](#)
- [The smuggler routes aiding Sudanese to reach safety in Egypt](#)
- [Unpacking Egypt's vital aid role in Gaza and Sudan](#)
- [News: Rights Commission prelim report confirms extrajudicial killing of dozens by security forces in Amhara state](#)
- [«የፕራቶሪያው ስምምነት ሳይፈጸም ሠራዊታችን ንጥቅ ፈትቶ እንደሚደባተን ለመንግሥት አሳውቀናል» አቶ ጊታቸው ራዲያ የትግራይ ክልል ገዢዎች አስተዳደር ፕሬዝዳንት](#)
- [X: Over 2.4 Million in Need of Food Aid Across #Amhara Region](#)
- [News: Referendum in Western Tigray not feasible amidst demographic changes, persistent displacement: Tigray interim admin](#)
- [በመራዌ ከተማ "የመከላከያ ኃይሉ የትኛውንም ዐይነት ሲቪል ዓላማ አለደረገም" ዶክተር ለገሰ ተሉ](#)
- [Ethiopian Refugees in Somalia Fear Violence Over Deal With Somaliland](#)
- [Somaliland rejects Somalia's criticism of MoU with Ethiopia, calls it 'sovereign decision'](#)
- [UN under pressure to take 'principled' position on rising Somalia-Ethiopia tensions](#)
- [Joint committee on Foreign Affairs and committee on Development and subcommittee on Human Rights](#)
- [2,200 Frontex emails to Libya](#)
- [X: IOM Libya](#)
- [Asylum and migration: Civil Liberties committee endorses a new legal framework](#)
- [MEPs can still halt the EU's harmful migration pact, say civil society groups](#)

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@eeepa.be any additional information and corrections.