

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 690 - 18 December 2025

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.

Announcement: This is the last Situation Report for this calendar year. The next issue will be published in the week of 5 January 2026.

Situation in Sudan (per 18 December)

- The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have systematically targeted Kanabi farming communities on ethnic grounds in Al Jazira state, especially during military operations in October 2024-January 2025, reports a new investigation by Lighthouse Reports in collaboration with several organisations.
- The attacks were allegedly pre-planned by forming special local armed groups, perpetrating over 50 verified attacks including the mass killings of hundreds of civilians, lootings, burning villages, and unlawful burials.
- The investigation warns of risks of further violence and killings of minorities, as ethnic hatred keeps rising throughout the country.
- Nine civilians have been killed by shelling residential neighborhoods in Dilling, South Kordofan, reports The Nuba Mountains Platform NGO, accusing Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), allied to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), of the attack on Wednesday.
- The RSF has carried out systemic attacks, including sexual violence, targeting West Darfur's Masalit community, aimed to terrorize and displace them, concludes a report by The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
- Killing, torture, rape and extortion of Masalit women are commonplace along migration routes. Many Masalit people have fled to Eastern Chad, where they face additional dangers with the RSF and allied infiltrators reportedly present within and around refugee camps.
- The Sudanese Teachers' Committee called for an investigation into the death of two teachers that reportedly died from torture in Dilling, South Kordofan. The teachers have died from injuries sustained in detention, said the Committee adding that the men were arbitrarily detained for months.
- Satellite imagery reveals RSF's efforts to destroy evidence of the mass killings in El Fasher, North Darfur, as the images show that 57 of the 150 analysed sites are no longer visible, with significant presence of RSF vehicles between 1 and 28 November, concludes Yale Humanitarian Research Lab.
- Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan ordered authorities to stop denying citizens access to identity documents, including political opponents, activists, journalists and residents of RSF supporting communities.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 18 December)

- A Gambela City Police Chief was killed by his colleagues at his workplace in Gambela city, Gambela region, on Tuesday, further deepening ethnic tensions and complicating efforts to restore order in the region.
 - "This is a very tragic act committed on the basis of clan and race," said an unnamed government official to Addis Standard.
 - Two Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church priests were killed by gunmen in Horo Guduru Wollega, Oromia region, after being abducted by gunmen. Government and opposition groups have been alleging that Oromo Liberation Army have been behind abductions and killings of people in the area.
-

- The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has stated that the suspension of Tigray's budget and restricted fuel supplies by the Ethiopian Federal Government have severely impacted communities, reversed gains in the Pretoria peace process, and needs timely intervention to "safeguard peace".

Regional & International Situation (per 18 December)

- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has called the recent release of 13 Eritreans from arbitrary detention "an encouraging development", further calling on the unconditional release of the estimated 10,000 people held in detention.
- The SAF leader, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, held talks with Saudi Arabia's crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, discussing security issues and bilateral relations in Riyadh, on Monday.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid India's first-ever visit to Ethiopia, discussing a new strategic partnership, and investment opportunities with the Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed, on Wednesday.
- South Sudan has reached an agreement with the Sudanese government on restarting the operations at Heglig and Bamboo oil fields in West Kordofan, Sudan, and strengthening bilateral cooperation.
- Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia have been ranked as the first, second and fourth on the list of countries most at risk of new or worsened humanitarian emergencies in a new report by the International Rescue Committee.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 18 December)

- Over 9,3 million internally displaced persons have been recorded as of 28 October in Sudan, a decrease of 19% in comparison to the highest peak in January 2025, with over 3 million returned persons in total, according to a new report by IOM.
- The EU Agencies, EU Member States, and international partner countries have discussed the closer coordination, and implementation of stricter policies on people smugglers, at the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling conference on 10 December in Brussels.
- Proposed measures include strengthening Frontex border controls by tripling forces to 30,000 officers.
- In her speech, Ursula Von der Leyen highlighted the 26% drop in migrant arrivals on key routes in 2025, adding that "We decide who comes and enters our borders and under what circumstances".
- Stricter global migration policies have benefited smugglers, boosting demand and enabling higher prices, shows a new report published by The Mixed Migration Centre of the Danish Refugee Council.
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has stated it will be unable to support around 11 million refugees of its current 36 million capacity, as a result of budget cuts and reducing the workforce by 5,000 staff members.
- 122 refugees from Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan have been evacuated from Libya to Italy by UNHCR.

Links of interest

[Investigative Report: The Kanabi Killings](#)

[Shelling kills 9 civilians, including 3 children, in Sudan's South Kordofan state](#)

[Sudan: Sexual violence against Masalit women extends into exile in Chad](#)

[Sudan teachers demand probe after two colleagues 'tortured to death' in army cell](#)

[RSF systematic mass killings and body disposal in El-Fasher, North Darfur 26 October – 28 November 2025](#)

[Al-Burhan orders end to withholding identity documents from Sudanese opponents](#)

[News: Conflict escalates following killing of Gambella City police chief as security structure fractures](#)

[Two Ethiopian Orthodox Church Priests Reportedly Killed In Wollega](#)

[X:Patrick Heinisch](#)

[Eritrea: Recent releases of detainees encouraging](#)

[South Sudan, Sudan agree to resume production at Heglig, Bamboo oil fields](#)

[Sudan's transitional leader al-Burhan holds talks with Saudi Crown Prince in Riyadh](#)

[India, Ethiopia elevate ties to strategic partnership during Modi's landmark visit](#)

[IRC: 2026 Emergency Watchlist](#)

[Sudan Displacement and Return Overview](#)

[Joint Declaration on the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling](#)

[Keynote speech by President von der Leyen at the second Conference of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling](#)

[Hardline migration policies are fuelling people smuggling, report finds](#)

[More than 11 million people will be affected by UNHCR funding gaps, UN warns](#)

[UNHCR: 122 refugees evacuated from Libya to Italy](#)

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@eeпа.be any additional information and corrections.