

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

No. 723 - 23 April 2026

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 23 April)

- The Sudanese army resumed heavy aircraft operations over Kordofan for the first time in months, with MiG fighter jets carrying out strikes on RSF positions around Dilling in South Kordofan.
- A senior Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commander, Major General al-Nour Adam known as "Qubba," defected to the Sudanese army in one of the highest-profile defections since the war began.
- The army chief General Abdel-Fattah Burhan of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) personally welcomed him in the Northern Province and declared that "doors are open" for others willing to abandon the paramilitary group.
- Sudan's Al Jazirah agricultural scheme has recovered to 85% capacity following what officials described as systematic RSF destruction that caused an estimated \$6 billion in asset losses.
- Sudan's Emergency Lawyers group documented the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of three brothers by both the SAF and RSF in different parts of the country, with two still held incommunicado in RSF facilities in Nyala while their family has been subjected to financial extortion.

Situation in Ethiopia/Eritrea (per 23 April)

- UN organisations and almost all NGOs in Ethiopia have suspended travel to Tigray.
- Authorities in Ethiopia's contested Western Tigray Zone are arbitrarily detaining and discriminating against ethnic Tigrayans, denying them IDs and restricting their movement, employment, and services, which forced many to flee amid ongoing persecution.
- Ethiopian authorities are forcing mass evictions under the Corridor Development Project, which amounts to serious human rights violations, according to an Amnesty International State of the World's Human Rights report.
- The report also addressed the lack of justice and accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict in the Tigray region in 2020.
- President of the Tigray Interim Administration Lt. Gen. Tadesse Worede stated that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) decision to reinstate the pre-war Tigray regional council "nullifies" the Pretoria Agreement.
- Ethiopia's Peace for Ethiopia Coalition, consisting of eight political parties, accused the ruling party and security forces of severe intimidation, arbitrary arrests, voter registration fraud, and candidate harassment, threatening to withdraw from the June elections unless abuses cease.

International and regional situation (per 23 April)

- EU Commissioner Jozef Síkela announced the resumption of over €140 million in direct budget support to Ethiopia, despite ongoing human rights concerns including stalled accountability, media crackdowns, and rising tensions ahead of June elections.
- The EU called for an immediate ceasefire and for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and United Nations (UN) arms embargo to be extended nationwide, as the Sudan war marks three years.
- The EU also warned it could impose more sanctions on Sudan's war economy and rejected any parallel governance efforts that could lead to the country's partition.

- A UN Panel of Experts report found that Libya's Subul al-Salam Battalion, part of General Khalifa Hifter's Libyan National Army, facilitated the transfer of Colombian mercenaries, weapons and fuel to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) through the southern town of Kufra.
- The battalion reportedly provided the RSF with a rear base, airbase access and vehicle modification facilities as part of this supply network.
- General Abdel-Fattah Burhan visited Saudi Arabia and Oman amid intensifying international pressure following the Berlin conference. Discussions included the establishment of humanitarian relief corridors, the transition to local truces in major cities and securing maritime corridors.
- A new report by the Conflict Insights Group found that UAE-backed Colombian mercenaries provided critical support to the RSF during the capture of El Fasher, marking what the organization described as the first research conclusively proving direct UAE involvement with the RSF.
- Amnesty International Kenya issued an advisory ahead of nationwide demonstrations on 21 April protesting fuel price increases, reminding the National Police Service of its constitutional obligation to facilitate rather than suppress peaceful protest.
- The Trump administration is exploring lifting sanctions on Eritrea and restoring diplomatic ties, driven by the strategic importance of Eritrea's 700-mile Red Sea coastline amid Iran's threats to close the Strait of Hormuz.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 23 April)

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) warned that without urgent investment to restore essential services, safe and sustainable returns remain at serious risk while almost nine million people remain internally displaced.
- Nearly four million displaced people in Sudan have returned to their places of origin, primarily in Khartoum and Al Jazirah state, only to find heavily damaged homes, destroyed infrastructure, and disrupted agricultural systems, IOM reported.
- Over 559,920 Sudanese refugees have entered Libya since the war began, making it one of the conflict's major escape routes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned that tighter border measures are forcing migrants onto longer and riskier desert paths.
- UNHCR called upon all countries to allow civilians fleeing Eritrea access to their territories and guarantee the right to seek asylum in its Guidance Notice on the humanitarian situation in Eritrea.

Links of interest

- [Sudan army resumes heavy air strikes in South Kordofan](#)
- [Senior RSF commander defects to Sudan army in major blow to paramilitaries | Africanews](#)
- [Al Jazirah Scheme Activity Hits 85% After RSF Destruction, Governor Says](#)
- [Sudanese rights group says army and RSF detained three brothers - Sudan Tribune](#)
- [Ethiopia: Persecution of Tigrayans Unrelenting](#)
- [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#)
- [News: Tigray Interim President says TPLF move to reinstate pre-war council "nullifies" Pretoria Agreement](#)
- [News Analysis: Coalition of eight political parties warns it will withdraw from elections unless 'widespread violations' against members are immediately addressed](#)
- [Three charges filed against Taye Dendea have been "temporarily" dropped.](#)
- [EU's Relations with Ethiopia Ignore Grim Human Rights Reality](#)
- [As Ethiopia Doubles Down on the Nile, Egypt Deepens Its Eritrea Alignment](#)
- [Sudan: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union marking three years of war](#)
- [Libya, UAE fuelled Sudan war with Colombian mercenaries, reports find | Africanews](#)
- [Burhan visits Saudi Arabia, Oman amid pressure for Sudan roadmap](#)
- [UAE-backed Colombian mercenaries provided support to Sudan paramilitary, report says](#)
- [PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY TO THE NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE AHEAD OF ANTICIPATED DEMONSTRATIONS ON FUEL PRICE INCREASES - Amnesty Kenya](#)
- [U.S. Seeks to Reset Ties With Reclusive but Strategically Vital African State - WSI](#)
- [As millions return to Sudan, UN calls for investment in essential services | Africanews](#)
- [Sudan War Drives More Than 559,000 Refugees Into Libya - The Media Line](#)
- [Guidance Note on Eritrea](#)

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.