Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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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.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 22 October)

- An Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) jet flew over Mekele in the morning of 21 October, according to an ACLED report. Tigray Television claimed that there was no military threat to residents.
- The ENDF retook control of Nirak, Abergele woreda's administrative center, in Amhara, after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces had taken control of the place on 19 October.
- The TPLF forces claimed to have killed 1,511 ENDF soldiers and many others injured in a surprise attack near Merena, central Tigray, during an attempted advance towards Adet, on 19 October.
- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has issued a strong warning to Eritrea of "very severe" consequences for allegedly supporting groups, such as the TPLF, that aim to destabilise Ethiopia.
- A drone strike reportedly killed four people and injured six more in Finarwa, a small town in the former Hadnet locality of Samre district, Tigray, on 21 October.
- A large number of ENDF vehicles moved out of Rama towards Adwa.
- Various ENDF drone strikes hit Semema town, in Adet Woreda, Central Tigray, targeting TDF vehicles.
- The Alliance for Survival (AS) rejected the statement by the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, which referred to the coalition as "separatist" and "terrorist". The Alliance for Survival affirmed that this is an inaccurate representation of reality, and that its main objective is to facilitate an "inclusive democratic transition".
- Fighting between ENDF and TPLF forces has been reported in Zana woreda, in northwestern Tigray.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) delivered more than 71 metric tonnes of medical supplies to Ethiopia's conflict-affected regions of Afar, Amhara and Tigray.
- Five people were killed, including four militia members and one civilian, in an armed attack on the Finchaa Sugar Factory compound in western Oromia on 21 October. Two factory workers were abducted and remain missing, while the raid also damaged vehicles and a bank branch.

Migration and refugee situation (per 22 October)

- The UK threatened to ban all Eritrean nationals from entering the country in response to Eritrea's refusal to accept Eritreans ordered to be deported, including foreign offenders. The UK accused Eritrea of withdrawing from the cooperation and discussions.
- The UK introduced the first restrictions towards Eritrea by banning Eritrean diplomats from moving further than 60km outside London. The restriction should be imposed from 22 October.
- Over 800,000 people in Somalia are in danger of displacement due to flooding in the coming months, according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Above-average rainfall and other unexpected weather phenomena could destroy homes, crops and livelihoods.
- More than 1,600 Ethiopian refugees returned from Yemen to the Horn of Africa region, mainly Djibouti, in August 2026, either voluntarily or were deported by Yemeni authorities, according to the IOM. Migrant and refugee arrivals remain significantly higher than departures.
- The European Union Agency for Asylum said that 31,000 Sudanese nationals have sought asylum in EU countries in the last years, making them the fifth-largest group of asylum seekers in the EU.

- Five people, including two humanitarian aid workers and three internally displaced persons (IDPs), were killed in a drone strike on a Sudanese refugee camp in the Bamna area of Chad on 20 October.
- The Eastern Libya Parliament, which is under the control of Commander Khalifa Haftar, has ratified a disputed 2019 maritime boundary agreement with Turkey.
- The deal covers provisions for bilateral responsibilities regarding migrant and refugee rescue operations and interceptions at sea.

Situation in Sudan (per 22 October)

- Over 150 people were killed after a drone strike hit a fuel depot and triggered a fire on a market in the disputed Abyei border region between South Sudan and Sudan. South Sudanese authorities accused Sudan of the attack
- Sudanese Armed Forces' (SAF) chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan rejected any foreign interference in Sudan and any possible negotiation with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in a speech delivered in Wadi Halfa.
- A drone by the RSF hit the Tendelti power transformer station in White Nile state on 20 October, damaging the main transmission line to North Kordofan and resulting in widespread blackout in many cities.
- The SAF claimed to repel an attack by the RSF in the Sally area of the eastern Blue Nile region on 20 October.

Regional and international situation (per 22 October)

- Ethiopia's foreign minister Gedion Timothewos urged the UN to provide a "clear and principled" response to the current situation, demanding the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray and condemning what he describes as Eritrea's "continued aggression".
- US Ambassador to Ethiopia Ervin J. Massinga emphasized the need to prioritize the well-being of civilians in Ethiopia and reaffirmed that peace should be achieved through dialogue and diplomacy.
- The UN and Switzerland hosted the latest round of international consultations on Sudan in Geneva on 21 October, bringing together representatives from over 20 countries. Neither the SAF nor the RSF were present at the meeting.
- The UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto, affirmed that diplomatic efforts to resolve the war in Sudan are intensifying, however, no concrete decisions or initiatives were announced after the meeting.
- Somaliland president Abdullahi Irro publicly expressed his support for Ethiopia, emphasizing the strong bilateral relations between the two countries. This statement came in response to the 4 October declaration by Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea which opposed Somaliland's recognition.

Links of interest

Conflict in Ethiopia
Tigray rebels claim to have killed over 1,500 Ethiopian soldiers as Abiy warns Eritrea
Four killed in drone strike in Ethiopia's Tigray region, residents say
Ethiopia: Alliance for Survival Rejects Rubio's Characterization of Ethiopia's Conflict As Separatist, Terrorist
#Daily Brief: WHO delivers more than 71 tonnes of medical supplies to conflict-affected northern #Ethiopia
Armed Attack on Finchaa Sugar Factory Leaves Five Dead and Damages Facilities in West Oromia
UK threatens to ban Eritreans over migrant return policy
800,000 Somalis threatened by flooding displacement: UN
More Than 1,600 Stranded Ethiopian Migrants Return from Yemen to Horn of Africa in August
EU agency says 31,000 Sudanese sought asylum as conflict deepens
Five killed, including two aid workers, in drone strike on Sudanese refugees in Chad
Eastern Libya signs contentious deal with Turkey, using migrants as bargaining chip
Sudan drone strike kills around 150 in Abyei market
Sudan's Burhan rejects external rule and dialogue with RSF in Wadi Halfa address
Rapid Support Forces drones strike Tendelti power plant, cutting electricity to North Kordofan
Sudanese army repels joint RSF and SPLM-N attack in Blue Nile region
Sudan legal expert clarifies scope of immunity decree for returning dissidents
#Daily Brief: #Ethiopia urges #UN response, demands #Eritrean troop withdrawal from #Tigray
Sudan conflict: Peace efforts resume to end 'drone war' fuelling humanitarian crisis
UN envoy says diplomatic push on Sudan intensifies despite war
Somaliland president backs Ethiopia amid rising Horn of Africa tensions
"Conflict Should Never Be the First Option" : US Ambassador Ervin Massinga on Peace, Regional Ties and the Path Forward

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