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.

Migration and refugee situation (per 29 October)

- A preparatory court hearing in the case of alleged Eritrean human smuggler Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam was held in Zwolle, the Netherlands, on 28 October.
- The Dutch Public prosecutor introduced a new indictment with additional charges including alleged participation in human smuggling and rape. These will be tried together with the charges introduced previously in March. The prosecutor also submitted a request for investigation with a list of witnesses.
- The panel of judges is to deliver their decision on the request for witness investigation and arguments raised by the defense during the next hearing which is scheduled for 11 November 2026 at 3pm.
- Thousands of people have been displaced due to a conflict outbreak in Moyale, Ethiopia.
- While it is difficult to know exact numbers, approximately 36,600 people are estimated to have crossed the border with Kenya. About 11,000 refugees are hosted by the Oriental Mission Church (OMC), and 25,600 people are displaced along the border hosted by local communities, said the IOM.
- South Sudanese and Eritrean refugee registrations have been suspended in Ethiopia, informed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Barham Salih during UNHCR's executive committee meeting, adding that cuts in global funding are widely affecting humanitarian programmes.
- The UNHCR has secured only 35% of its required 8.5 billion dollars budget for its operations in 2026.
- The voluntary return of 140 Somali refugees from Yemen has been facilitated by the Saudi aid agency KSrelief, in collaboration with the UNHCR.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 29 October)

- The Central Command of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces accused Major General Yohannes Woldegiorgis, also known as "John Medid," of defecting to the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).
- Administrators of seven sub-cities of Mekelle, Tigray, were appointed by the mayor Dr. Shishay Amare, under the auspices of the Tigray caretaker administration.
- At least 48 people were killed and more than 31 wounded by armed attackers in Chole and Birbo, Oromia, with civilians, including children and older people, targeted in their homes. Residents said the assault lasted several hours.
- In the aftermath of the attacks, about 50 people who participated in burials of victims or helped wounded people have been detained, according to witnesses.
- Seven former Ethiopian diplomats have urged the US to distinguish opposition to the federal government from separatism, arguing that the Alliance for Survival seeks democratic change rather than the break-up of Ethiopia.

Situation in Sudan (per 29 October)

- At least 36 people were killed and 150 more were injured in drone strikes on a busy market and a residential area in Nyala, South Darfur, on 26 October. The attacks are attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

- Hundreds of people are fleeing Sudan's Blue Nile region following repeated attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) alliance in the Jabal Al-Nimr and Minza areas.
- Drone strikes by the RSF hit a power station, a fuel tanker, and a gas station in Menagil, Gezira State, on 28 October. Electricity was completely cut off and fire spread in the impacted area.
- The SAF retook the strategic military base of Bukuri and the Uklili area in the Blue Nile region near the border with Ethiopia from the RSF and SPLM-N alliance on 28 October.
- Drones launched by the RSF hit fuel storage facilities and an export pipeline in Haya, Red Sea State, on 28 October.
- A drone strike by the RSF severely damaged the Al-Markhiyat transformer station northwest of Omdurman, causing blackouts all throughout Khartoum and River Nile state on 27 October. Engineers are currently assessing the damage to restore service as soon as possible.

Regional and international situation (per 29 October)

- Sudan has accused Ethiopia and the UAE of enabling a series of drone attacks on civilian areas and vital energy infrastructure, presenting flight data and imagery they claim point to launches from Ethiopian territory. Ethiopia and the UAE have not commented yet.
- Ethiopia has received 12 Russian Su-35 fighter aircrafts and plans to acquire S-400 air-defence systems, with PM Abiy Ahmed stating that the military equipment helps to expand Ethiopia's defence capacity.
- Russia reinstated its readiness to host mediation talks between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- While both Eritrean President, Isaias Afwerki, as well as Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed are attending the Russia-Africa Summit scheduled for 28 and 29 October, neither of the leaders confirmed their willingness to accept mediation efforts by Russia.
- Civil society organisations, including Human RIghts Watch, are opposing the nomination of UAE diplomat Lana Nusseibeh for the position of UN Secretary-General, citing her denial of the UAE's human rights violations and its support for the RSF in Sudan.
- The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan warned that recent political changes in the country have weakened the 2018 peace settlement, concentrating power and excluding opposition figures as December elections approach.
- A public hearing on the situation of human rights violations in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is being organized by the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) on 4 November.

Links of interest

Acled: Conflict in Ethiopia
News: At least 48 civilians killed in weekend attacks in Ethiopia's Oromia region, once again
Ethiopia: Seven Former Ethiopian Diplomats Urge U.S. to Distinguish Opposition Alliance From Separatist Movements
Situation Report Special: New indictment introduced in Kidane court case; List of witnesses submitted by the Dutch prosecutor
World News in Brief: Ethiopians flee to Kenya amidst renewed conflict
#Daily_Brief: #UNHCR funding shortfall suspends refugee registration for tens of thousands in #Ethiopia
Somalia: Flooding and climate-related pressures threaten to displace hundreds of thousands
#Daily_Brief: Hundreds flee RSF attacks in #Sudan's Blue Nile as fighting intensifies
KSrelief helps 140 Somali refugees return home from war-torn Yemen
Dozens of people killed and 150 injured in Sudanese Armed Forces' Nyala drone strike
Drone strikes hit power station in Sudan's Managil, cutting electricity
#Daily_Brief: #Sudanese army recaptures strategic base near #Ethiopian border from RSF-SPLM-N alliance
Drones target fuel, power facilities in Sudan's Al Managil and Haya
Sudan assesses damage after drone strike on Khartoum power station
Sudan accuses Ethiopia of launching drone strikes on civilian infrastructure and power stations
Ethiopia acquires Russian fighter jets and air defence systems amid war in Tigray
Russia Offers to Mediate Ethiopia-Eritrea Talks at Moscow Summit
UAE: UN Secretary-General Candidate Whitewashed Abuses
South Sudan: UN Commission calls on General Assembly to take urgent, collective action to secure lasting peace
Public hearing on human rights in the Horn of Africa, focus on gender-based violence

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