

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

## No. 598 - 19 December 2024

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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.

*This is the last Situation report of this calendar year. Publishing will return to the regular schedule in January 2025.*

### **Situation in Sudan (per 19 December)**

- Shelling by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in El Fasher, North Darfur, resulted in 10 deaths and 20 injuries on Wednesday with casualties expected to rise, according to the El Fasher Resistance Committees. RSF also reportedly targeted the Saudi Hospital supported by Médecins Sans Frontières.
- In Nyala, South Darfur, an airstrike by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on a school sheltering displaced people killed two people and injured 21, including children, with some victims still trapped under rubble, according to witnesses.
- Recent escalation and attacks on civilian populations in the Darfur region and Khartoum was strongly condemned by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, calling for immediate de-escalation.
- "After 20 months of conflict, this ever-rising toll of the dead and injured is unacceptable. International humanitarian law must be respected," said Nkweta-Salami.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) ramped up efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in Sudan reaching 800,000 people in famine and famine-risk areas across Sudan. Through the food assistance programmes, WFP reached four times more people in November compared to September.
- A new report by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) highlights the alarming use of sexual violence as a weapon in Sudan's conflict, with both the SAF and RSF committing widespread abuses, including rape, gang rape, human trafficking for sexual purposes and forced prostitution.
- "Girls as young as nine through to women aged 75 have been subjected to widespread sexual violence, including rape and gang rape by the conflicting parties", states the report.
- Approximately 2.7 million women of reproductive age are displaced in Sudan, including over 272,000 pregnant women, with many lacking access to essential healthcare services due to the ongoing conflict, reports the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- The decision to hold the Sudanese certificate exams on 28 December has been condemned by Sudan's Emergency Lawyers, arguing that the current situation denies students in conflict-affected areas and displacement camps equitable access to education.
- They highlighted the severe challenges these students face, such as violence and lack of basic services, which hinder their ability to reach exam centers. The group called for urgent action to protect students' rights and ensure that all individuals have safe and equal access to education

### **Situation in Ethiopia (per 19 December)**

- Many IDP returnees are facing severe hardships since their return to North Western Tigray due to a lack of promised support and essential services, leading to a deepening humanitarian crisis.
- Returnees stated that gaps in public service, healthcare, education, local administration, judicial and security services cause them to continue to live in fear and deepen their frustration.

- Starvation has been the leading cause of death across all ages in Tigray following the Cessation of Hostilities agreement among IDPs as well as broader communities, according to a new study, with children under five being more susceptible to starvation-related deaths.
- The Ethiopian Parliament has approved a new proclamation which permits foreign banks to operate in the country, marking a significant shift amidst ongoing economic reforms.
- While the ruling Prosperity Party supports the legislation, some opposition members have raised concerns about the capacity of local private banks to compete with foreign institutions and the potential risks of capital flight.
- A bomb attack in Bahir Dar, Amhara region, left one person dead and several others injured. The explosions occurred during a regional government-organized rally on Wednesday.
- Residents reported that the attacks appeared to target demonstrators, and clashes followed the rally, indicating rising tensions in the area, while local government officials described the protests as peaceful.
- Prolonged drought and ongoing conflict in Bugna District, Amhara Region, have caused severe food shortages affecting over 10,000 residents, including young children, according to local health officials.
- The situation has been exacerbated by insufficient rainfall, environmental degradation, and a lack of support from relief organizations

### **International & Regional Situation (per 19 December)**

- Approximately 1,140 civilians were arbitrarily arrested and detained between January 2023 and May 2024 in South Sudan including women and girls who refused to accept an arranged marriage, reports the UN Human Rights Office and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- A senior official from the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Colonel Gemechu Ayana, has accused Eritrea of breaching the Algiers Agreement by violating Ethiopia's sovereignty during its involvement in Tigray war.
- He called for the Ethiopian government to take immediate action against Eritrea's occupation of parts of Tigray, asserting that Eritrea's military incursions contradict the terms of the peace agreement that established border demarcations and respect for territorial integrity.
- The EU has imposed sanctions on four senior Sudanese officials from the SAF and RSF due to threatening peace and stability, as well as violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Sudan has refuted the EU's decision to sanction two army generals calling the decision "flawed and defective".

### **Refugee and Migration Situation (per 19 December)**

- The Swiss Federal Council has announced that processing of Sudanese asylum applications will resume next week, with individual cases being assessed while considering the ongoing security and socio-economic challenges in Sudan.
- Sudanese asylum seekers in Switzerland have been in a state of uncertainty as the State Secretariat for Migration imposed a moratorium on these applications since February.
- Food aid distribution program for over 3,300 Sudanese refugee families in various Libyan cities has been initiated by the Libyan Relief and Humanitarian Aid Authority, in collaboration with WFP, providing essential items like oil, canned goods, and nutritional supplements.

### **Links of interest**

- [Deadly attacks on civilians and medical facilities in Darfur](#)
- [Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan condemns shelling and airstrikes on civilian areas in parts of Darfur and Khartoum](#)
- [WFP delivers aid to over 800,000 in Sudan's hunger hotspots](#)
- [War Time Sexual Violence, a Tactic in the Sudan Armed Conflict](#)
- [An estimated 2.7 million women of reproductive age displaced in Sudan](#)
- [Sudan's Emergency Lawyers warn of educational inequalities as exams loom](#)
- [Returnees in North Western Tigray struggle to rebuild amid humanitarian crisis.](#)
- [Starvation remains the leading cause of death in Tigray, northern Ethiopia, after the Pretoria deal: a call for expedited action](#)
- [Ethiopia Approves Law Allowing Foreign Banks to Operate](#)
- [News: Bomb attacks at 'gov't-organized' rally in Amhara region leave one dead, several injured](#)
- [South Sudan: UN report says arbitrary arrests and detentions remain serious concern](#)
- [Senior OLF officer accuses Eritrea of violating Algiers Agreement, calls for swift response](#)
- [Sudan slams EU sanctions on 2 army generals](#)
- [Asylverfahren für Sudan-Flüchtlinge werden wieder aufgenommen](#)
- [Libya aids Sudanese refugees amid ongoing hardship](#)

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