

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 Sudan (per 20 February)

- The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) members gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, on Tuesday during a political event aimed at signing a charter through which the paramilitary and aligned actors attempt to establish a new breakaway government.
- The signing of the charter was postponed to Friday due to ongoing negotiations. Young Sudanese fear they will be forced to choose sides if RSF forms a parallel government, according to sources.
- In a response, Sudan Sovereign Council members asserted that the Sudanese government would resist any attempts to create a parallel administration.
- The growing alliance between the RSF and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, could pose a risk of escalating the war, particularly in the Nuba Mountains area where the situation has been relatively quiet in the past period.
- Al-Hilu participated at the RSF meeting in Nairobi, where he referred to RSF leaders as "comrades" and called for a new state free from violence and discrimination.
- RSF have carried out a violent three-day attack in the White Nile state, resulting in over 200 deaths and numerous injuries, with reports of executions, kidnappings, and looting, said the Emergency Lawyers.
- The UN human rights office (OHCHR) has raised concerns about increasing human rights violations in Sudan, attributing the escalation to a lack of accountability as fighting intensifies and more armed groups become involved.
- "The situation in Sudan has reached a dangerous tipping point", warned Li Fung, head of the OHCHR office in Sudan.
- Over half of Sudan's population is facing severe food shortages, with famine conditions being confirmed in 10 locations, and another 17 being on the brink of famine, warned the UN, prompting a \$6 billion appeal to prevent a humanitarian disaster.
- SAF reportedly besieged areas controlled by the RSF in Khartoum with no food allowed to come in.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 20 February)

- 26 Fano divisions held a conference where they reportedly decided to form Amhara Fano in Wollo division with a coherent command. This is now the biggest Fano grouping.
- Eskinder Nega reportedly stepped down from leadership of the Amhara Fano Popular Organization.
- There is a collapse of security and rule of law in Amhara with kidnappings and robberies being very common, sources say. In the last weeks, armed people reportedly broke into houses and kidnapped political functionaries or business people to claim ransom, or loot the houses.
- The economy in Tigray is struggling with costs of living increasing. With inflation making basic necessities unaffordable, people do not have money to buy goods.
- Companies struggle buying raw materials while fuel shortages and disrupted supply chains further hinder recovery efforts in the region.

Situation in Eritrea (per 20 February)

- The Eritrean government has mandated that all citizens under 60, including previously demobilized individuals, undergo military re-training and remain on standby, while also prohibiting those under 50 from leaving the country, informs Human Rights Concern - Eritrea (HRCE).
- The new directive further orders married women and those with children “to return to their respective military units”. The new measures are raising concerns among the population of the possibility of another armed conflict.

Regional & International Situation (per 20 February)

- Sudan accused Kenya of violating Sudan’s sovereignty for hosting the meeting of the RSF and its allied forces in Nairobi. In a response, Kenya rejected these allegations stating that the main motive for hosting the meeting is its commitment to finding a peaceful resolution of Sudan’s conflict.
- The African Union's Peace and Security Council has called for a humanitarian ceasefire in Sudan during Ramadan, emphasizing the need for an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities between the warring parties.
- Ethiopia and Somalia scheduled their next round of discussions regarding the Ankara Declaration for March. Both nations expressed their dedication to respect each other's sovereignty, while also addressing Ethiopia's need for sea access within the framework of Somalia's territorial integrity.
- Former Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome Wirtu has accused Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki of trying to exploit internal divisions within the TPLF to jeopardize the Pretoria Peace Agreement, potentially reigniting conflict in northern Ethiopia.
- Eritrea's Ministry of Information has dismissed Wirtu’s allegations, asserting that the internal issues facing Ethiopia should not be blamed on Eritrea, criticising attempts to externalize Ethiopia’s conflicts, while also rejecting claims of Eritrean military involvement in Ethiopia's internal matters.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 20 February)

- Over 120,000 cases of pushbacks have been recorded in 2024, states a recent report by a coalition of nine human rights organizations, revealing a significant increase in pushbacks of irregular migrants at the external borders of the European Union.
- The report highlights the often violent nature of these expulsions and criticizes the EU for failing to uphold fundamental human rights, while also noting the involvement of various member states.
- Two mass graves that had been discovered in Libya, are believed to contain the remains of migrant and refugee bodies, according to IOM.
- With at least 49 bodies found so far, some showing signs of gunshot wounds, the IOM emphasized the urgent need for improved protections and human rights for migrants, while also calling for the dignified recovery and identification of the deceased.
- Over 30 organisations called upon the European Commission to re-allocate the funding for immigration control in Libya towards creating safer alternatives for migrants and refugees.

Links of interest

- [Sudan: General Dagalo is in Nairobi to set up a “parallel” government in RSF-controlled areas](#)
- [Member of Sudan's Sovereign Council vows to fight attempts to establish parallel government](#)
- [Political developments threaten to reignite fighting in Nuba Mountains](#)
- [Sudan: At least 200 killed in paramilitary attack](#)
- [UN rights office warns of 'dangerous tipping point' as abuses surge in Sudan](#)
- [UN launches \\$6 billion Sudan appeal, as famine takes hold](#)
- [Amhara Fano Popular Organization Reportedly Makes Major Leadership Change](#)
- [Eritrea Orders Nationwide Military Mobilization, Raising Fears of Renewed Conflict](#)
- [Kenya rejects Sudan's accusations of backing RSF meeting](#)
- [African Union calls for Ramadan ceasefire in Sudan, condemns external actors](#)
- [Ethiopia, Somalia to hold next round of technical negotiations on Ankara Declaration in March 2025](#)
- [To avoid another conflict in the Horn of Africa, now is the time to act](#)
- [News: Eritrea rejects former Ethiopia President accusations of 'reigniting' regional conflict](#)
- [EU borders recorded over 120,000 migrant pushbacks in 2024, says report by NGOs](#)
- [Two mass graves of migrants uncovered in Libya](#)
- [Libya: After discovery of mass graves, EU funding should "save lives and open up safe routes"](#)

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