

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 27 February)

- A military plane crash in Omdurman resulted in at least 46 deaths and 10 injuries, with initial reports suggesting a possible technical failure as the cause. The incident occurred on Tuesday in the residential area of Omdurman near a military airport.
- Major-General Bahr Ahmed, a senior commander in Khartoum, was reportedly among the victims which according to reports included 17 military personnel and 29 civilians.
- The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has temporarily halted its critical food and nutrition aid due to ongoing violence in the Zamzam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- The decision by the WFP, which came only a few days after the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) suspended its programmes due to repeated attacks on the camp, further exposes IDPs to risk of starvation.
- Any actions that create division among the Sudanese people rather than fostering unity are considered "undesirable", stated Ramtane Lamamra, UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan, in a reaction to a charter signed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) forming a parallel government.
- Two years of Sudan's conflict "have inflicted immense suffering and turned parts of the country into a hellscape", said Ms. Edem Wosornu, UN OCHA Director of Operations and Advocacy, during the UN Security Council, urging for international action to uphold humanitarian law and facilitate aid access.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 27 February)

- The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has denied allegations of secret communications with the Eritrean government, labeling these claims as false and lacking evidence, while accusing certain media outlets and Ethiopian officials of spreading misinformation to undermine the peace process.
 - The statement comes in response to a report by Africa Intelligence suggesting increased contacts between Tigray Defence Forces and Eritrean officers.
 - Salsay Woyane Tigray, an opposition party in the Tigray region, has decided to join the Tigray Regional Interim Council after changes were made to enhance the council's decision-making authority, addressing the party's earlier concerns about its framework.
 - The Council was established on 2 February with the aim to provide guidance to the Tigray Interim Administration, having initially an advisory role.
 - The International Press Freedom (IPI) network called on Ethiopian lawmakers to denounce proposed amendments to Ethiopia's media law which would allow greater government control over media regulation and diminish the diversity of the Ethiopia Media Authority's board.
 - Kesseme Sugar Factory, Afar, has announced plans to lay off over 1,100 employees due to damages sustained during the recent earthquakes in the Afar region, causing distress among workers.
 - Initially, a notice indicated immediate contract terminations, but this was later revised to provide a notice period of one to three months based on employees' length of service.
 - Many employees, who are currently displaced and living in temporary housing due to the seismic events, expressed concern that the factory's decision disregards their difficult circumstances.
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Regional & International Situation (per 27 February)

- Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed arrived in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Thursday to hold discussions with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.
- Through a joint communiqué, the leaders emphasized the importance of their historical ties and the need for increased diplomatic, economic, and social collaboration, as well as the implementation of strategic infrastructure projects. They also welcomed the initiation of technical talks in Ankara, Turkey.
- Mortars were reportedly fired near the airport in Mogadishu as the city prepared for the arrival of the Ethiopian PM. The incident occurred amid heightened security measures, and while some mortars landed close to the airport, there were no immediate reports of casualties.
- Three African nations, including Somalia, Sierra Leone and Algeria, condemned the establishment of a parallel government in Sudan during the UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday, warning that it could jeopardize peace efforts and lead to further fragmentation.
- Germany pledged an additional €50 million in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia in support of cross-country projects managed by UNHCR, UNICEF, and UN Women.
- The African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) is set to deploy a total of 11,900 personnel, comprising military, police, and civilian support staff, in Somalia as confirmed by officials from Somalia and the African Union.
- The personnel distribution includes 4,500 troops from Uganda, 2,500 from Ethiopia, 1,520 from Djibouti, 1,410 from Kenya, and 1,091 from Egypt.

Refugee and Migration Situation (per 27 February)

- The European Commission is seeking to expedite the review of the safe third country concept, aiming to complete it by March instead of the previously scheduled June deadline, as part of ongoing reforms to asylum procedures.
- Proposed changes include altering the connection criterion, which currently requires a link between the asylum seeker and the third country for return, potentially allowing for a more flexible approach or even the criterion's removal, which could lead to transfers to countries with inadequate asylum standards.
- The Dutch government is moving forward with a plan to deport asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal options to Uganda, despite concerns about compliance with European regulations.
- The initiative, led by Ministers Reinette Klever and Marjolein Faber, targets asylum seekers who cannot return to their countries of origin.
- Leaked audio from Greek rescue coordinators has raised questions about Greece's report surrounding the sinking of a boat, which resulted in the loss of about 650 lives of refugees and migrants in 2023.
- An unidentified officer from a Greek rescue coordination center is heard directing the captain of the migrant boat to inform an approaching vessel that the passengers do not wish to go to Greece but to Italy instead. The recording has been handed to a Naval Court in charge of investigation.

Links of interest

[Sudan military plane crashes in residential area](#)
[WFP forced to pause food distributions in Sudan's Zamzam camp as fighting intensifies](#)
[Sudan war: Any peace deal must respect national sovereignty, UN envoy says](#)
[Conflict has turned parts of Sudan 'into a hellscape,' Security Council hears](#)
[UN warns of worsening famine in Sudan as fighting escalates](#)
[TPLF rejects claims of "secret talks" with Eritrea, calls accusations "fabricated falsehoods"](#)
[Facebook: Tigray Mass Media Agency](#)
[Ethiopia: IPI urges lawmakers to reject proposed media law amendments](#)
[Leaders of Ethiopia, Somalia reaffirm their commitment to strengthening cooperation](#)
[Ethiopian News Agency: Joint Communiqué](#)
[Mortars fired toward airport in Somali capital amid Ethiopian premier's visit: Report](#)
[African nations to UN condemn parallel Sudan government plan](#)
[Germany commits additional €50 million for cross-country humanitarian responses](#)
[AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission](#)
[Commission pushes to fast-track asylum rules review](#)
[Netherlands pushing ahead with plan to send asylum seekers to Uganda](#)
[Leaked recordings challenge Greek account of deadly shipwreck](#)

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