

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA & NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

## No. 699 - 29 January 2026

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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 29 January)

- The Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) reportedly clashed in Tselemti, western Tigray. The clashes started several days ago and the current situation is unclear.
- There are reports of military movements in southern Tigray.
- All flights between Addis Ababa and Tigray have been cancelled. This has left travellers stranded.
- The borders are not closed at the moment, and some people are leaving Tigray by car.
- The banks in Tigray limited cash withdrawals to 2000 birr in Tigray; in Mekelle the limit is 5000 birr. There are long queues at the banks in Mekelle. The ATMs are empty.
- According to some sources, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and rich merchants have been systematically taking the cash over weeks.
- Surveillance drones were seen in Mekelle.
- A lot of youth in Tigray is reportedly on the move, afraid of being conscripted into the military.
- The internet in Tigray still works.
- Two weeks ago, the TPLF reportedly arrested General Geush Gebre, who was a popular TDF general. He criticised the alliance with part of the Fano militia.

### Situation in Sudan (per 29 January)

- The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have broken a nearly two-year-long siege by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLA-N) in Dilling, South Kordofan, on Monday.
- The SAF troops reached the town after gaining control over nearby Habila, and opening a supply road connecting the town to SAF controlled territories in North Kordofan.
- Military experts state that the event marks a significant gain, and is a possible precursor for a new offensive on Kadugli, South Kordofan's capital.
- At least 5 people have been killed by suicide drone attacks on Tuesday in Dilling, following other reported drone strikes on Monday with unknown casualties.
- The situation in Dilling remains tense, the UN Spokesperson for the Secretary-General said on Wednesday that access routes are still cut off, with large shortages of food, healthcare and basic needs.
- Lynching and detention of suspected RSF collaborators have been reported by Sudan War Monitor
- Over 88,000 people have been displaced in South Kordofan since October, reports the IOM.

### Situation in South Sudan (per 29 January)

- The South Sudan's People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) recaptured the villages of Tiam and Wek, on the outskirts of Yuai town, capital of Uror county in Jonglei state in a clash with a small number of Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) troops, on Monday, report local officials.
- During the clash, huts were reportedly burned. The villages had previously been captured on 2 January by SPLA-IO as a reaction to the detention of First Vice President Riek Machar.
- Following the recent SSPDF military buildup, government spokesperson Ateny Wek Ateny stated at a press conference on Tuesday that the government is "not at war" but solely "returning to the positions that the SPLA-IO has captured from us", in order to restore public order, and safeguard civilians.

- In a reaction, Puok Both Baluang, press secretary in the office of Riek Machar, said that Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), is merely reinforcing defensive lines, as self-defense towards a regime "that has consistently violated its [peace] agreement", and also in order to restore public order, and safeguard civilians.

### **International and regional situation (per 29 January)**

- Kenya is pushing for South Sudan peace talks, aimed to reach an inclusive peace deal and strengthen institutional preparedness for the December 2026 elections, reports Radio Tamazuj, following a meeting between Kenyan President William Ruto and a South Sudanese delegation in Nairobi on Wednesday.
- The United States has resumed food aid to Somalia, after the Somali Foreign Ministry said that it takes "full responsibility" for the raiding of a World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse and confiscating of aid supplies.
- Sudanese Prime Minister Kamil Idris has met Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh, to discuss a possible Sudanese return to the African Union (AU), and maritime cooperation, on Wednesday.
- The WFP warns that it will be forced to end cash and food distribution in Somalia in April, unless it can raise an additional \$90 million in new donor funds.
- Ethiopian finance minister Ahmed Shide met today with US deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau to discuss Ethiopia's economic reform program, investment opportunities and relations.

### **Refugee and Migration Situation (per 29 January)**

- The Dutch court has sentenced notorious Eritrean trafficker Walid to 20 years in prison for leading a criminal smuggling network in which refugees in Libya were tortured, extorted and raped.
- The court sided with the public prosecutor on the key issue of jurisdiction, stating that the Dutch court has jurisdiction as part of the crimes, including threatening phone calls to family, and the effect of the crimes occurred in The Netherlands.
- This week saw multiple deadly shipwrecks in the Central Mediterranean, in which hundreds of refugees and migrants may have lost their lives. Severe weather conditions hampered rescue efforts.
- The deaths of at least three people, including two babies, have been confirmed, but witness testimonies indicate that more boats have gone missing.
- The EU has delivered more migration control equipment to the Tunisian National Guard. So far, it has transferred €21 million worth of equipment under the 'Border Management Programme (BMP)'.
- Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani, offered to train Libyan police in order to curb migration.

### **Links of interest**

- [Clashes between government troops and Tigrayan forces erupt in Ethiopia](#)
- [Flights to northern Ethiopia cancelled as fears mount of renewed conflict](#)
- [Sudanese army breaks RSF siege of Dilling in South Kordofan state](#)
- [Sudan army says two-year RSF siege of key town broken](#)
- [Relief Force Reaches Dilling — But Is the Siege Over?](#)
- [Dilling, South Kordofan: Calls for air bridge on second day of deadly drone strikes](#)
- [Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General](#)
- [SSPDE pushes toward Yuai](#)
- ["We are not at war," South Sudan says](#)
- [SPLA-IO: We act in self-defence](#)
- [Kenya proposes inclusive South Sudan peace talks](#)
- [US resumes Somalia food aid after WFP warehouse damage](#)
- [UN aid agency faces shut down, despite new EU Somalia funds](#)
- [Minister of Finance of Ethiopia Meets United States \(U.S.\) Deputy Secretary of State to Discuss Economic Development Reforms and Investment Cooperation](#)
- [Dutch court sentences Eritrean migrant smuggler to 20 years](#)
- [Central Mediterranean: Fears of 'hundreds' of migrants missing and dead](#)
- [Italy says ready to train Libyan police amid rising numbers of immigrants](#)
- [EU delivers more migration control equipment to Tunisian National Guard](#)

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