



## News: Amidst deepening security crisis in Benishangul-Gumuz state, Rights Commission calls for “immediate action” to ensure civilians’ safety

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Lt. Gen. Asrat Denero, Commander-in-Chief of the FDRE Ground Forces and Coordinator of the Metekel Zone Integrated Command Post in a meeting with local militia in Pawi Wereda. Picture: Metekel Zone

### Addis Standard staff

**Addis Abeba, October 01/2021** – The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has called on the federal government and the local command post “to take immediate action” to strengthen the security situation in Metekel and Kamashi zones of the Benishangul-Gumuz regional state.

The Commission’s statement came despite repeated pledges from the federal Command Post in Benishangul-Gumuz state that federal and special forces deployed in the region from five different regional states were putting the security crisis under control.

However, quoting residents who are currently fleeing from Sedal Woreda to other areas, EHRC said that since January 2021, many residents have been displaced by repeated attacks in the district, and since March 2011, government offices have been closed.

The Commission said that as of 24 September 2021, residents who fled the area informed it that 145 Gumuz families, including children, women and the elderly, had been detained by local forces known as ‘Gumuz militants’ . The militants abducted the civilians accusing them of “not supporting” their causes and detained them in an area commonly known as Mersha and Ekfet. Among the hostages “at least two people were killed by the militants” EHRC said, adding that the rest were kept “under severe suffering.”

After an attack on September 24, “around 5,000 residents of Sedal Woreda have been displaced and are temporarily housed in the Woreda Administration’s compound,” EHRC said.

### ...despite repeated attacks on civilians in Kamashi and Metekel zones of the Benishangul-Gumuz state, the measures taken by the federal and regional governments fell short of resolving the problem adequately

**EHRC**

Following the Commission’s monitoring, on September 26, fighting has been taking place between local security forces and the militants and since September 29, efforts are being exerted to evacuate residents to Daliti town. “However, both Sedal district officials and residents who fled the district say that the security forces in the area are inadequate,” EHRC said.

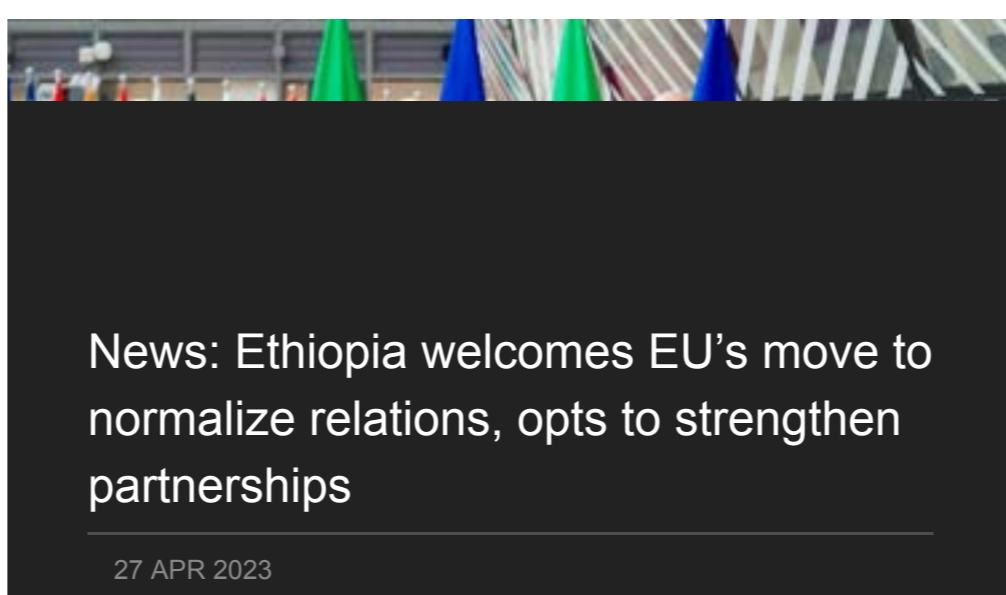
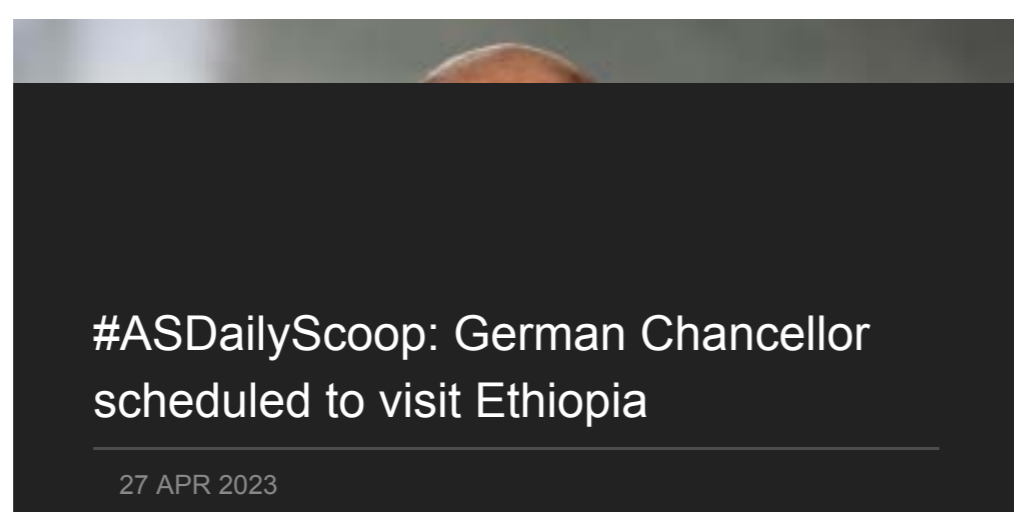
Furthermore, despite repeated attacks on civilians in Kamashi and Metekel zones of the Benishangul-Gumuz state, the measures taken by the federal and regional governments fell short of resolving the problem adequately and further solutions needed to be found to solve the problem comprehensively. “The commission urges the people of Sedal Woreda not to be exposed to the worsening humanitarian crisis and for immediate action to be taken to ensure that the displaced people sheltered in Daliti and other temporary shelters to receive the necessary humanitarian assistance,” said Dr. Daniel Bekele, Commissioner of the EHRC.

On September 30, Lt. Gen. Asrat Denero, Commander-in-Chief of the FDRE Ground Forces and Coordinator of the Metekel Zone Integrated Command Post, **held a discussion with members** of the militia who had undergone military training in Pawi district of the Benishangul-Gumuz state.

During the meeting Lt. Gen. Asrat to the militia that they should repeat the patriotic deeds of the past generation by successfully completing their mission. According to Major Mersha Nigusie, Deputy Commander of the 7th Mechanized Division, 1,797 militia members in the Pawi woreda were on stand by to restore peace in the region after receiving the necessary military training. **AS**

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