

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 112 - 26 March 2021

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- **Correction:** The number of deaths in Axum estimated by Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) that we reported yesterday is incorrect. Neither organisation has put out a definitive number, but both estimate the number of casualties at ‘hundreds’, with both organisations estimating a minimum of 200 deaths. The EHRC estimated the number of deaths lower, as “over a hundred”.
- Both organisations identify Eritrean troops as the main perpetrators of the extrajudicial killings.
- One witness also told AI that he saw 400 bodies on November 30th alone. However AI also said that many more bodies were found in subsequent days.
- AI found that Eritrean soldiers also rounded up hundreds or thousands of men.
- AP published that a thousand people were estimated to have been killed in Axum based on an interview of a deacon who says that he helped count the bodies.

### Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 25 March)

- Ethio-360 states that the Ethiopian government is paying a monthly salary to Eritrean soldiers. According to the report, it has credible source and is confident that the monthly salary is being paid as follows: for ordinary soldier - 15,000 Birr (309€), for junior officers - 20, 000 Birr (412€) and for Senior officer - 30,000 Birr (617€)per month is paid.
- These payments are very high compared to the stipend that Eritrean soldiers receive in Eritrea. In the Indefinite national service, Eritrean troops are often left with as little as 3,3 US\$ a month: “In the army military you receive 700 nakfa [USD 47]. But for us, there is no salary. There is 200 nakfa [USD 13] for the family directly from the government in cash, but since 2013, family only gets food (only if you are not in prison then they stop it and when you escape, they stop it). They give us 90 nakfa [USD 6], but they deduct 45 nakfa [USD 3] for camp and food, which leaves 50 nakfa [USD 3.3] as pocket money. (Interview 14, face-to-face, the Netherlands, 26 May 2019)”, [stated an interviewee in 2019](#).
- Many IDPs in Tigray have reportedly walked for two weeks, and some have walked as far as 500 km to reach safety. Many young people have been killed and raped. Deliveries have been difficult, often resulting in the loss of the babies. The IDPs are often left with few to no possessions.
- An entire family was allegedly killed by the Ethiopian soldiers in Ziban Sase, a village between Idaga-Hamus and Frewyeni town, eastern Tigray.

### Reported Situation on Rape (as per 25 March)

- In a briefing, UN aid coordinator in Ethiopia said that 516 rape cases have been reported to five clinics (Mekelle, Adigrat, Wukro, Shire and Axum) in Tigray region.
- “Women say they have been raped by armed actors, they also told stories of gang-rape, rape in front of family members and men being forced to rape their own family members under the threat of violence,” Wafaa Said.
- She projects that the actual number is actually much higher than reported due to a stigma associated with rape and the few functioning healthcare facilities.

### Reported Situation in wider Ethiopia (as per 25 March)

- The Ethiopian Somali regional state asks the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) to reverse its decision to call off polling stations. The state explained that it would find it difficult to participate in the upcoming elections if the recent decision by the NEBE to call off the 30 polling stations was upheld.

### Reported Situation in the Horn region(as per 25 March)

- Eritrea's Minister of Information, Yemane G. Meskel said Ethiopian PM Abiy arrived on 25/3/21 in Asmara for a two days working visit. His delegation was welcomed by President Isaias Afwerki.
- According to the Sudan Tribune (ST), Sudanese forces clashed with Ethiopian militiamen on Wednesday in the contested border area with Ethiopia.
- The Sudan Tribune says the Sudanese Forces clashed with armed Ethiopian militias backed by the Ethiopian army forces from the Amhara region in the Basinda area. Ethiopian groups penetrated 8 kilometres into the border according to the news organisation. Several people were killed.
- A Sudanese ministerial delegation will head to Abu Dhabi on Friday (26/3/21) in response to the UAE initiative to resolve the border conflict between Sudan and Ethiopia.

#### Reported international situation (as per 25 March)

- At a joint press conference, the US Secretary of State and the EU High Representative, expressed concern about the conflict in Tigray and said that they had discussed various ways in which ensure a cessation of hostilities, ensure that Eritrean troops leave Tigray, ensure better humanitarian access, and investigate crimes against humanity that have been committed in Tigray.
- The US and EU also urged parties involved in the GERD negotiations to "show flexibility and move promptly to resume productive negotiations in the coming weeks"
- The US calls on the Ethiopian government to uphold fully its commitment to safe and unhindered humanitarian access and underscores the need for forces to end fighting immediately in the region.
- The United Nations and an Ethiopian rights agency have agreed to carry out a joint investigation into abuses in Tigray region. "With multiple actors involved in the conflict and the gravity of the reported violations, an objective, independent investigation is urgently required," the statement said.
- US Amb. Linda Thomas-Greenfield says the protection of civilians and the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance must be ensured after MSF's report of civilian killings and assault of humanitarian workers.
- The Dutch government has said, in an answer to a parliamentary question, that they have called on Eritrea to immediately withdraw troops. It is also in conversation with the EU and EU member states, the US, and UN to improve the situation in Tigray and push for an independent investigation.
- The Dutch government says that there have been some concessions by the Ethiopian government, but these are not enough. These can, however, form the basis for a constructive resolution to the conflict.
- The Global Society of Tigray (GSTS) wrote to the OHCHR in protest against its agreement with Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to jointly investigate human rights violations in Tigray.
- In its substantiation, the GSTS refers to the report by the EHRC on the massacre in Mai Kadra that took place on November 9-10, 2020. The EHRC reported that it found that the perpetrators of the Ma Kadra massacre were the TPLF and that the victims were ethnic Amhara.
- However, the GSTS contests these findings based on its own investigation in the Mai Kadra massacre. It found that the massacre was conducted by Amhara Special Forces, militiamen and an armed youth squad, 'Fano' and found that "90% of the victims were ethnic Tigray".
- The GSTS says that it is, therefore, deeply alarmed by the decision of the OHCHR to conduct a joint investigation with Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into the grave crimes in Tigray, that it is not impartial and asks for the decision to be retracted on the ground that an independent international investigation is necessary.

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#### **Links of interest**

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict-un-idUSKBN2BH2ZC>

<https://aje.io/cq3h7>

<https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article69349>

<https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-an-ocha-briefing-on-the-humanitarian-situation-in-ethiopia/>

<https://apnews.com/article/witnesses-recall-massacre-axum-ethiopia-fa1b531fea069aed6768409bd1d20bfa>

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/03/25/beantwoording-vragen-over-het-bericht-situation-report-eepa-horn-no-50-van-9-januari-en-situation-report-horn-no-81-van-11-februari>