

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 114 - 29 March 2021

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Eritrean withdrawal agreement(as per 29 March)

- A source has provided potential new information regarding the withdrawal of Eritrean troops that has been agreed. However, this information has not been confirmed. It is printed here because of its reliable source and, if it were to be true, this is significant information.
- According to this unconfirmed information, PM Abiy and President Esayas have made a deal which is referred to as an “Army Withdrawal from Tigray Agreement.”
- The agreement calls for at least a partial integration of Eritrean forces into the ENDF. This would help fill a capacity left by the war in Tigray. The integration of these forces would be financed by Ethiopia and would also involve a change of Eritrean troops into Ethiopian uniform.
- The numbers mentioned are so significant that this requires further corroboration.
- If these elements of the deal would be true, then technically there is no exit but a significant redeployment, change of uniform and budgeting for the inclusion of the Eritrean troops into the ENDF.
- The unconfirmed information states that the troops would be trained under the authority of Eritrean General Filippos.
- Within this agreement, Ethiopia would also finance the training of new Eritrean soldiers.
 - In addition to the above, there have been several reports that Eritrea is rounding up young boys aged 16 or older, and sending them to training camps.
 - And a separate message which was obtained from Asmara reads: *“All families have been asked to hand in their children from 16 onwards. ALL CHILDREN TRAINED OR UNTRAINED. IT DOESN’T MATTER. People are rattled and very fearful.”*
- The ‘Army withdrawal from Tigray Agreement’ allegedly also calls for Amhara militias to be integrated into the ENDF.
- The agreement would also call for the reintegration of officers of Tigrayan origin, after they have been through a political education programme.
- If these details regarding the agreements are true, it would be a drastic set of measures. The numbers mentioned in the information are significant. There have been indications that the ENDF has been having difficulties fighting the conflict in Tigray, and that the withdrawal of Eritrean forces could endanger Ethiopian government control over the region.
- Simultaneously, Ethiopia has found itself under significant pressure from the United States, the EU and the UN to stop the intervention by foreign actors in the conflict. The Ethiopian government might be trying to reduce the pressure.
- A witness testimony has related the situation of a 16-year old highschool student from Asmara, Eritrea, who was rounded up in a razzia in January 2021. He was taken to Barentu where he was given two months of training with other conscripts.

- The family of the 16-year old Eritrean boy lost contact with him once his training was finished and they were unsure of his location. They realised that he had been sent to fight in Tigray when he was named with his full name on Tigray television after he had been captured by Tigray regional forces. This further confirms that Eritrea is deploying underaged minors in Tigray.

Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 28 March)

- Axum University four professors, Alemshet Gebrehiwot, Berihu Gebremariam, Hadgu Ataklti and Berihu Hailu, were identified among those killed by Eritrean soldiers during the Axum massacre.
- Reports from inside Tigrays indicate fresh deployment of Eritrean soldiers. A total of 37 trucks of Eritrean troops entered Tigray on 27 March 2021 through Adigrat. 25 trucks out of the 37 are stationed in Edaga Hamus, near Adigrat and they are now gathering there from surrounding areas.
- The remaining 12 trucks with freshly deployed Eritrean troops went to Mugulat (on the way from Adigrat to Enticho) and are stationed there. New troops from West Tigray are stationed in Selekleka, near Shire.
- Reports of 13 civilians, including a mother with 2 kids (aged 5 and 7 years) and an entire family of 5 were executed on 24 March 2021 by Eritrean soldiers in Finarwa, near Samre, South-eastern Tigray.
- Eritrean soldiers killed everyone in the neighborhood after identifying militiamen's wife among them.
- Ethiopian soldiers searched a safe house for survivors of gender based violence on 24 March 2021 in Mekelle, Tigray. Soldiers, many in number, entered the premises claiming donations to the institutions were being smuggled to the 'junta'.
- The soldiers showed no care for the property or regulations of the facility that prohibits the presence of males over the age of 3 years to provide a safe space for women who have suffered trauma. The soldiers abused employees of the facility and illegally detained one of them for hours.
- Telecom service was shut down today from 8pm till 12pm in the Tigray region. But restored at 12pm.
- Tigrai Media House (TMH) confirmed that its satellite TV transmission has been blocked due to the pressure of the Ethiopian government and the CEO promised the service will be restored soon.
- During his acceptance speech at GUMMA AWARDS, a Tigrayan Artist, Esayas Tadesse, said: "I won't celebrate when my mother is shedding tears of blood; my brother brutally slaughtered and his body thrown off a cliff; and my genteel sister raped by hooligans. I shall celebrate when my mothers' tears are wiped and the dignity of my homeland is restored."
- A video was obtained of an interview with a mother who escaped from May Kadra to Mekelle. She escaped with her 20 years old pregnant daughter. When the war erupted and the Eritrean soldiers joined the war, the mother went to the bush with her daughter.
- When the pregnant daughter started labor there was no one to assist. The fetus died and the mother expelled the dead fetus on her own as there was no anyone to help. The daughter developed fistula because of the long labor. The mother and daughter traveled all the way to Mekelle for medical treatment (fistula treatment) and safety.
- When the mother was asked about the May Kadra massacre, she stated that the Fano Youth Militia committed the killings. She said many of her neighbors were killed with machetes and stones. Their dead bodies were eaten by dogs. The victims did not get a chance for burial.

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