

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 133 - 23 April 2021

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Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 22 April)

- According to a source from within Eritrea, a lot of Eritreans are reportedly being sent to Tigray.
- Reported that Alula Hailu, Deputy Chairperson of Salsay Weyane Tigray Party and Kahsay Hailu, Finance head of the party were taken to an unknown place by Ethiopian soldiers in Mekelle.
- Fires were detected on MaySagla, Weri-Leake Woreda, Central Tigray on 21 April 2021 on satellite imagery. The area falls within active conflict between Tigray defense forces and ENDF allied forces.
- On 22 April 2021, multiple gunshots and heavy artillery were heard for hours in the outskirts of Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region.
- Reported that trucks loaded with emergency food aid that were heading towards Nebelet and Hawzen, central and eastern Tigray are blocked by Eritrean troops.
- More than 800 Eritrean troops were reportedly destroyed by Tigray defense forces near Abi Adi, Central Tigray.
- Internet access and in many areas electricity remains cut in Tigray. Alex de Waal is urging that a priority is made to reestablish them. According to him it would help solve some of the most pressing issues.
- It would increase communications and thus the ability to provide humanitarian assistance. It would also provide protection for civilians and help prevent atrocities. Internet access would allow people to warn each other and flee for example. Thirdly access to the internet would allow Tigrayans to communicate with their family, and ensure each other's wellbeing. Lastly it would vastly improve the ability to investigate and look into alleged massacres.
- De Waal argues that the Ethiopian government would only be against this if they have something to hide. It is important to ensure that the situation can be properly monitored.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (as per 22 April)

- Demonstrations are taking place in multiple Amhara cities, denouncing targeted attacks against the Amhara community.
- According to the Addis Standard, "hundreds of thousands" are protesting attacks against ethnic Amhara in other regions of Ethiopia
- The Amhara Prosperity Party regional head denounced the protests, which has seen pictures of Prime Minister Abiy being torn apart, of being "hijacked" by the TPLF, OLF, and other anti-governmental forces.
- He also accused the main Amharic opposition party NaMA of being behind the protest and condemned their (political) attacks on federal and regional officials.
- The past year has seen increasing ethnic tension in Ethiopia. There has been an increase in ethnic violence, and many experts are warning that if a National dialogue does not take place soon, the situation could further deteriorate. This could eventually lead to the end of Ethiopia.

- Reports of clashes between residents and Amhara regional State police and Special Forces are coming from BahirDar city, the capital of the region.
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has received reports that Sedal Woreda, in Benishangul-Gumuz Region, has come under near full control of an armed group as of April 19, 2021. The area is home to 25 thousand people.
- Residents who have fled the area told EHRC that the armed group has burned down and looted public and private property. Local police have fled the area.
- There are also reports that civilians have been killed and public servants have been kidnapped. According to residents and officials the EHRC spoke to, a small contingent of the regional security force in the vicinity is outnumbered and additional forces have yet to reach the locality.
- The ECHR says that this escalation of the insecurity plaguing the region is alarming. It is continuing to monitor the situation and is in communication with local and federal authorities.
- They also call for “immediate reinforcement of the security forces in the area and in the region as a whole and a speedy intervention to prevent further loss of life and human rights violations.”
- The EHRC has expressed concern for the safety of civilians who fled the area fearing for their lives and said it was in discussion with relevant federal and local authorities.

Reported Situation in the Horn region (as per 22 April)

- The spokesperson of Ethiopia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs says recently released captured soldiers by Sudan were Ethiopian farmers, not soldiers.
- Spokesperson Dina Mufti stated: “The fake stories flowing from the Sudanese side about capturing 61 Ethiopian soldiers is not true. The truth is that they have captured about 61 Ethiopians, of which 59 are farmers residing in the border areas, but portray them as captured soldiers which is not the case.”
- According to him, only two of them are militias and 59 farmers. As a matter of fact there is no military confrontation right now between the two countries. “There is no way that this side or the other side captures soldiers from the battlefield. Yet they are trying to portray that there is military confrontation between the two countries,” he added.

Reported International situation (as per 22 April)

- The United States state department has said that it has seen no evidence of an Eritrean withdrawal from Tigray, despite being announced almost 20 days ago.
- The US State department spokesperson is reiterating the need for Eritrea to withdraw immediately.
- The US embassy in Asmara has posted a message on facebook which said that it hoped to be able to work more closely with Eritrea in the future. However it also makes clear that Eritrean forces need to leave Tigray as these are destabilising the region.
- In a statement issued on Thursday, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called for an upscaling of the humanitarian response in Tigray and called for unfettered access to the whole region. They stated that the ongoing conflict in Tigray is an impediment to humanitarian operations and call for a “return to normalcy.”
- The UNSC is also expressing deep concern at the allegations of human rights violations and abuses and called for an investigation into the abuses.
- UNICEF is warning that there is no “end in sight” for the conflict in Tigray.

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