

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 143 - 07 May 2021

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Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 06 May)

- Fierce fighting continued in recent days between Eritrean and Tigray forces near Endabatsahama and Edaga Arbi. There was also fighting between Eritrean and Tigray forces at Adigiba on May 05, 2021.
- ENDF Soldiers are looting civilian clothes and in the last three days, 113 ENDF soldiers were captured escaping Tigray wearing civilian clothes.
- Eritrean soldiers killed civilians and buried them in toilet holes in Qola Tembien, Tigray. 19 unarmed civilians were taken by Eritrean troops from Adet and their whereabouts are unknown.
- An eyewitness said Eritrean forces are digging trenches spanning from Badme to Egela borders.
- Reported that many Eritreans are crossing the Sudan border to Kassala and Hamdayt from Omhajer Eritrea, fearing possible fighting in the area after they saw new trenches being dug.
- MSF said that many people in rural areas of Tigray have yet to receive food and basic necessities. They say that while aid has reached “main cities of Tigray region, over recent months, aid is failing to reach more remote communities, where the impact of the conflict that sparked the current crisis has often been severe.”
- Some areas are showing “severe acute malnutrition well above the emergency threshold”. With the rainy season approaching, the situation could get worse. Crops and fields are often inaccessible due to the conflict.
- Other organisations have warned in the last week that the window to sow new crops in Tigray is closing fast, and that action needs to be taken now to avoid a long famine in the region.
- An emergency coordinator for MSF said that by the time they arrived in late 2020 the healthcare system in the region had entirely collapsed.
- An MSF team found that Adiftaw, three hours north of Axum, has been looted and “partially destroyed” and dozens of people were killed. The “water system was broken after the pumps at the boreholes had been deliberately shot at”. Ten thousand people living in and around the village “have been unable either to see a doctor or be referred to a hospital for specialist care.”
- Due to the high demand, the MSF team eventually had to start to triage due to lack of supplies and capacity, and only help those in most urgent need.
- MSF says that in Sebeja, as in many other Tigrayan towns, the clinic lies in ruins. Healthcare has become very difficult to provide, and there are long waiting lines when an MSF team shows up.
- MSF mobile teams carried out 300 consultations in Adiftaw and Sebeja, most of them related to sexual and reproductive health issues, malnutrition, pneumonia, and diarrhea.
- UNHCR said, as of 25th of April, “nearly 8,100 refugees from Hitsats and Shimelba had relocated to Adi Harush and Mai Aini camps “. More Eritrean refugees are approaching UNHCR in Mekelle.
- In a new report, the UNHCR says 600,000 IDPs are in Shire, 97,000 in Shiraro, and 82,000 in Mekelle.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (as per 06 May)

- The Ethiopian Parliament has approved the bill designating the TPLF and Shene as terrorist groups.
- There has been condemnation of this move as trying to suppress political opposition to the government. Some point out that both organisations do not exist anymore. The TPLF was dissolved in November by the government, while there is no organisation that legally identifies as Shene. They also mention that the timing, one month before the election, is unfortunate.

- The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) says that the amount of young unaccompanied refugee children arriving in Addis Ababa is increasing.
- According to the UNHCR, there are “1300 unaccompanied and separated children” in Addis Ababa. JRS says that without support, many end up on the streets. It is facing an uphill battle to reunite them with their families or provide them with education.
- The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) high command said in a statement that the “illegitimate ruling party” of Ethiopia has once again quashed the prospect of peaceful resolution of the catastrophic political conflict in the country.
- It called the upcoming election a “sham” and accused the Ethiopian government of choosing “the path of war and destruction to achieve its sole objective of remaining in power at any cost.”
- Furthermore, OLA said that while violence is not its primary choice, it was forced to take this path. It says that it will hold “the “Prosperity Party” [...] solely responsible for all damage and pain that will result from the continuation of armed conflict in Oromia and Ethiopia.”
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has expressed serious concern at the large amounts of detentions in Oromia. They say that many of those arrested did not have a formal investigation against them, and have not been brought before a court.
- They also say that police stations have kept in detention people “whose charges were dropped by prosecutors or who were supposed to be released in accordance with a court order.”
- The EHRC is also concerned with reports that “grave violations of human rights have been committed” against the people in detention.
- EHRC said it has received “credible testimonies” and that monitoring teams have visited certain sites.
- These monitoring teams “observed detainees who had open wounds in various parts of their body and those displaying temporary or permanent physical disabilities”
- Teams also reported women among those detained in all police stations visited, as well as children being held along with adults. Some children have also been imprisoned with their mothers.
- The stations visited were also “unhygienic and overcrowded rooms which pose serious health risks. Most of the detainees face dire conditions as a result of the absence of food supply in the detention centres coupled with lack of access to water, sanitation, and medical services.”
- The EHRC also said that they had received credible “reports of arresting family members of suspects in some areas that includes arresting a father or mother to demand that they present their children.”
- Following the death of Commissioner Abere Adamu, the opposition party National Movement of Amhara has called on authorities to “immediately announce to the public the exact reason for the Commissioner’s passing.”
- The attending physician said the Commissioner died due to complications related to the heart muscle.
- The Commissioner has in the past suggested that there had been military preparations prior to the conflict starting in Tigray.

Reported International situation (as per 06 May)

- U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Chris Coons met with Tigray refugees in Umrakoba camp Sudan.
- Chris Coons said: “there are still Eritrean troops all throughout Tigray and other places in Ethiopia.” He added that “the conflict is not over and not resolved in Tigray” and urged accountability for human rights violations, a ceasefire, the removal of foreign troops (Eritrean troops in particular), and a path towards a resolution of the conflict.

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- https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/97842/G7%20Foreign%20and%20Development%20Ministers%E2%80%99%20
- <https://jrs.net/en/story/ethiopia-facing-challenges-to-protect-unaccompanied-refugee-children/>
- <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/unhcr-regional-update-15-ethiopia-situation-tigray-region-12-30-april-2021>
- <https://addisstandard.com/news-nama-cautions-authorities-to-investigate-and-make-public-former-police-commissioners-cause-of-death/>
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