

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 42 - 2 January 2021

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Military situation (as confirmed per 2 January 2021)

- Multiple sources state that Eritrean soldiers are blocked in attempts to leave Tigray. Heavy fighting between Ethiopia National Defense Forces (ENDF) and Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) is taking place near the major roads out to Eritrea. This has stopped the Eritrean transfer of looted goods out of the region.
- A source says that the ENDF is handing Shire, Tigray, to Eritrean troops. Eritrean telecom is servicing the area. Some people received calls. The Shire area hosts 100.000 Eritrean refugees.
- A source states that the Tigray Egela Woreda (including Gerhu-Sirnay, Semhal, May-Hamato, Leyto, Endaba-Estifanos, and Gere'a), on the border with Eritrea, is occupied by Eritrean soldiers and Eritrean telecom is providing full coverage. Citizens made calls, using phones of Eritrean troops.
- The TPLF says that it has shot down an ENDF airforce gunship on 30/12 8:30.
- Belgian TV shows footage of dozens of "shot-up army vehicles".
- Reports of rape of Tigray women as part of the violence carried out on civilians in Tigray.
- Sudan has declared that it achieved control of its territory occupied by Ethiopian farmers after several weeks of fighting in the area. Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs accused Sudan of sending troops into Ethiopia, which is denied by Sudan. Negotiations between the countries broke down last week.

Regional situation (as confirmed per 2 January 2021)

- Egypt reported that the statement of the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Dina Mufti, was "totally unacceptable". The statement held that Egypt "has turned Ethiopia into a threat", a statement that was related to the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.
- Egypt will hire an international law firm to protect investments, states Alaa Al-Saqati, head of the Egyptian Industrial Zone in Ethiopia, to initiate a case before international courts against Ethiopia.
- Al Shabaab and the Somalia ISIS branch have been emboldened after Ethiopia and the US withdrew a significant numbers of troops. The terrorist organisations state that they will disrupt elections planned for early 2021. There are fears of suppression and low turnout.
- The government and opposition in Somalia are in disagreement on the election preparations. The President has been accused by the opposition of "stacking" election committees with loyalists.
- There are concerns about the severe coronavirus restrictions in Eritrea. Sources say people have described the restrictions as a death sentence as they have no food. The rules do not apply to soldiers.
- Representatives of Ethiopia forced 179 truck drivers from the Tigrayan company EFFORT to hand the trucks over to the Ethiopian government. Amharic and Tigray drivers were separated. The drivers refused, but were brought to camps and forced to hand over the keys of the trucks.

Situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 2 January 2021)

- UN risk assessment team has reportedly not been able to travel outside Mekelle. According to a report they feared the Ethiopian security forces were surveilling their work.
- Aid agencies say that they are still largely unable to access the rest of Tigray. No communications, damaged infrastructure and government restrictions have stopped them from reaching most areas in Tigray. The Ethiopian government is still refusing full access.
- Students from the University of Adigrat have been transferred to Mekelle University. The other institutions in Tigray, have all been looted. Mekelle remains the only functional university in Tigray.
- Many houses have been completely looted. Utensils, valuables, and furniture have been taken. VOA Tigrigna has also reported that investments worth billions of Birr have been destroyed and looted in the southern areas of Tigray.
- ENDF soldiers have rounded up youth in Mekelle and these were taken to an unknown location.
- Report that the transitional Tigray government (Prosperity Party) is intimidating scholars of Mekelle University to join the Prosperity Party and to take a position in the transitional government appointed by the Federal Ethiopian government.
- The elected government of Tigray (TPLF) states on its station DW that it will act against Tigrinians working with the transitional government appointed by the Federal Ethiopian government.
- Trucks owned by the Tigray EFFORT company were taken to Addis Ababa by the Ethiopian government.

Situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 2 January 2021)

- No evidence has been presented against the Reuters cameraman arrested on thursday 24 december. He will be held until January 8th, pending investigation.
- More reports of ethnic profiling and harassment against Tigrayans, including at Bole airport.
- 310 people were arrested in Ethiopia for causing disputes between the Ale and Konso communities in South Ethiopia. The conflict between the communities was quelled after traditional reconciliation. The communities are now helping each other rebuild their homes. Traditional law can help settle disputes.
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) released a report on the killings that took place in June following the assassination of the Oromo musician Hachalu Hundessa's June 29th. 123 people were killed in the violence, 75 were killed by Ethiopian security forces. Many more were wounded and displaced as a result. The EHRC report finds that Crimes against Humanity took place by groups perpetrating the massacre.
- Witnesses interviewed by the EHRC stated that sometimes police watched and did not intervene while attacks were taking place.
- The EHRC said that they "did not find any indication of ongoing efforts to investigate the use of force by security officers during the unrest and to hold to account those who caused unnecessary human suffering".
- The report noted that "crimes against humanity of this nature combined with the current national context are signs that the risk of atrocity crimes, including genocide, is increasing". They call for investigation and "a lasting institutional solution."

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