

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 65 - 24 January 2021

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Reported war situation (as confirmed per 24 January)

- Al Arabiya reported that Ethiopia has bombed the Abu Tayyur area, and the Sudanese army has responded. The Sudanese army has not announced any deaths due to the bombing of Ethiopia. Other news outlets state that the Sudan airforce has responded with air attacks in Ethiopia.
- Sudanese media report that authorities in Sudan prevented Ethiopia's Ambassador to Sudan, Yibeltal Aemro, from leaving the country via land. The ambassador eventually took a flight back to Ethiopia.
- The Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, issues a statement asking "members of the public to be vigilant about fake news circulating" about the PM on social media. The statement comes after PM Abiy has not been seen in public since December 23rd and many theories are circulating on social media on the condition of the PM, including that the PM was flown to a hospital abroad. Others say he was seen this week with his military commanders, but not in the media.
- Among increasing speculation of the situation of PM Abiy, far right Amhara party high officials have started posting in social media: 'now is the time'. There is increasing concern over the political stability and questions raised why PM Abiy is not appearing in public.
- Social media also report that the Interim President of the Tigray region, Mula Nega, handed in a resignation letter, with as reason "the plight of the people of Tigray who are starving to death and sexually harassed by foreign forces" and that the the administration had no say in any matter; the resignation would have been submitted to the Office of the PM, and Nega is waiting for a response.
- Report that 48 priests were killed, allegedly by Eritrean forces, in a massacre at the orthodox church of Adi Fetaw village near Gerihu Sernay Town, Tigray, not far from the Eritrean border.
- Eritrean forces killed 24 priests in a massacre in the Edaga Arbi area, Central Zone, Tigray, today 24/11.
- Detailed report of looting in Yeha: "Eritrean soldiers went from house to house. They looted many objects, even clothes. Other objects were broken so that they cannot be used any more. They group-raped an 8th month pregnant lady. They continued the looting in surrounding villages, up to the monastery of Abune Mezraete in the hills above, where some of the church equipment was stolen. The Eritrean soldiers are either very young, below 18, or old, between 60 and 70 years."
- The report about Yeha also identified: "The checkpoints by Eritrean soldiers in that area are strict. There are many. They want to avoid that young men move and get trained."
- It is reported that in May Hanse city close to Hitsats, near Shire, Tigray, an Eritrean Colonel gathered local residents and said Eritrea will rule them as of that time. He said, if they accept this, they can live there, if not, they have to leave the place.
- Eritrea is claiming territory deep into Tigray. Eritrean troops have put their flags in Sheraro.
- It is reported that the Amhara members of the national Orthodox leadership had proposed that the Ark of the Covenant from Aksum would be taken to Tana (Bahir Dar) for temporary protection. This caused the bloodshed in Aksum at the Maryam Zion Church. People in Aksum did not accept the

proposal but thought it was a pretext to steal the Ark of the Covenant, regarded as 'a robbery of heritage'. The people were prepared to defend the Ark with their life.

- Detailed direct report of an entire family having been killed in Aksum. Previous reports indicated that massacres had taken place in Aksum, allegedly carried out by Eritrean soldiers.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 24 January)

- Ethiopian government will be setting up local militias in the Metekel Zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz region to combat the recent increase of violent intercommunal attacks. "Locals will be trained and armed to defend themselves" said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Demeke Mokenen, during his visit to IDPs from the Metekel Zone.
- An official, who holds a high position in the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry and asked for anonymity, told Anadolu Agency that "Egypt has intensified its destabilization efforts against Ethiopia and the volatile Horn of Africa region."
- TPLF-leader Sebhat Nega stated during his court appearance in Addis Ababa (15/1): "I don't want to speak Amharic because I can't. Until I got arrested I never thought about Tigray but Ethiopia. You took us to the mountains from our houses without a single changing cloth, none of us has been captured from the mountains". This confirms reports that the elderly leaders were arrested in their houses. He appeared in court together with Keriya Ibrahim, former Speaker of the House of Federation of Ethiopia.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 24 January)

- Killings in Tigray of former Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin and two other former senior political figures are reason for concern, as they were elderly and in poor health, says former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, pointing to demands of a high-level international investigation.
- The World Health Organization is putting out a warning that the conflict in Tigray may lead to the spreading of deadly diseases, as health services have been disrupted. The WHO reports that the incidence of COVID-19 in the Tigray region is higher than the average for the country.
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization says he was honoured to speak with VP Kamala Harris on the commitment of the Biden administration to the WHO.
- Questions raised as to whether the 2018 Peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was a precursor to the war establishing an alliance of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the United Arab Emirates, providing the Emirates with a military base in Assab, Eritrea. The alliance is accused of a strategy of a "scorched earth war and deliberate mass starvation in what is a genocide in the making."

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Links of interest

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/egypt-working-to-destabilize-ethiopia-east-africa/2120191>

<https://twitter.com/PMFethiopia/status/1353169117839306752?s=2>

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/24/ethiopias-leader-must-answer-for-the-high-cost-of-hidden-war-in-tigray?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/24/fabled-ark-could-be-among-ancient-treasures-in-danger-in-ethiopias-deadly-war?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fworld%2F2021%2Fjan%2F24%2Ffabled-ark-could-be-among-ancient-treasures-in-danger-in-ethiopias-deadly-war&sgt=shv2&sg=fecadec1&sid=2&__twitter_impression=true

<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2021/01/23/the-peace-that-delivered-total-war-against-tigray/>

<https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1352313007624347649>