

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 72 - 31 January 2021

[Europe External Programme with Africa](#) is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peace building, refugee protection and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EEPA has published extensively on issues related to movement and/or human trafficking of refugees in the Horn of Africa and on the Central Mediterranean Route. It cooperates with a wide network of Universities, research organisations, civil society and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and across Africa. The situation reports can be found [here](#).

Reported war situation (as confirmed per 30 January)

- Fresh reports from the battlefields in Tigray state that second campaign has started with fighting reported in Daero Hafash, Semema, Mahbere Dego, Feresemay, Nebelet, Hawzen, and Edaga Arbi.
- Reported “that Eritrean presence in the second campaign is very high.” The report reads: “The Eritrean troops are present at all the fronts. They use the following tricks: using the Ethiopian flag; changing uniforms to ENDF; sometimes hiding troops in some areas, etc.”
- Except for Hawzen in Eastern zone, fighting is concentrated in the Central Zone of Tigray.
- Report that Eritrea brought 13 trucks of troops via Edagahamus (Eastern Tigray zone) towards Hawzen and Nebelet areas.
- Sources indicated that Eritrean forces and Ethiopian National Defence Forces mobilized 163 military transport cars (‘orals’) of soldiers via Maytsebri to Endabaguna and then into Central Tigray.
- Video from Shire showing 8 big trucks passing by, loaded with Eritrean troops, posted on 29 January.
- Reported that 20 young people were killed by the allied forces in areas between Adidaero and Adi Kokeb in the North Western part of Tigray.
- A list of names of civilian people killed in Irob dated 28/01, put together by the Irob Advocacy Association, shows 52 names; 50 men and 2 women. The list is “not exhaustive”. According to the association all 52 civilians were “killed in their homes and backyards, during the late December 2020 to early January 2021” campaign. The association states that they “did not take part in combat mission.” The civilians were “peasant farmers” and included teenagers.
- The 52 civilians killed in Irob all fall under the administration of Irobland, from the villages of Gammaa Daa/Alitena, Maagauma, Awo, Aggarale, Waratle, Kafna, Addaga-Abbe, Addaga-Dululuho, Addaga-Sassaleri, Massata-Kimbiro, Assagarwa-Ado Dagga, Garabino, Assagarwa and Maytsiaa. The association is located in Kebeke 3, Adigrat, Tigray.
- Report that Eritrean refugees from Hitsats were forcibly sent back to Eritrea by Eritrean forces and these have “settled around Badme area.” The report states that the refugees have been “without enough access of food, water and shelter” for “more than 45 days.” Among the refugees are young people, mothers and children, the report states.
- A source reports that the price of 100 kg teff is now 8000 Ethiopian Birr, equivalent to €167.00.
- In an interview with Alex de Waal, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, advisor to the TPLF and Senior Fellow of the World Peace Foundation, states that Seyoum Mesfin, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Asmelash Woldeselassie, former Ethiopian parliament chief whip and Abay Tsehaye, Ethiopia's former minister of Federal Affairs were killed: “They were staying in a village, and they didn’t have an army. They were just in a secluded area. They (..) killed them. It was the EPLF that killed them.” The EPLF is a reference to the Eritrean troops of Eritrean President Esayas.
- A source reports on the sadness of losing Seyoum Mesfin killed in this way: “I am not a member of any political party. We know Seyoum and it is not just about power. I sat with him, shared his life experience.” He adds: “He is our symbol of freedom and perseverance. He is a true leader and hero for

many. He has sacrificed his whole lifetime for his people. People are in shock. His death is so painful for all of us.”

- In the interview, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot expresses himself clearly on the expectation that the Eritrean forces will remain in Tigray.
- Mulugeta Gebrehiwot states: “They had a meeting last week, it is some information we got from them, among the senior commanders of the army. There was a request from some of the army commanders on how long they are going to stay in Tigray. The response they gave them was, ‘Once we leave Tigray, PP [Prosperity Party] will not stay for one week in Tigray, and therefore we will leave Tigray to Weyane [TPLF] again and it will revive. And therefore, we have to remain there up until PP can pick it up which might take several months to come back.’ That is the answer that they gave them.”
- TMH reports that according to sources from Adigrat, Eritrean troops dismantled a radar which was installed in Adigrat following the Ethio-Eritrean war (1998-2000) and is transported to Eritrea.
- It is reported that soldiers kill those who saw a crime - including rape, or tried to help; this was news that came with people who travelled from Adwa and Aksum to Mekelle.
- A source reports a meeting with a doctor from Aksum who stated that on the day of the Aksum massacre he himself listed 300 bodies. The reflection is that even more than 750 people might have been killed. The community had understood that the Eritrean soldiers were intending to remove the Ark of the Covenant and the community came to protect it, including women and young people. The source states: “This was a massacre.”
- Report that soldiers take revenge on civilians. In some places the soldiers intimidate the people: “For every battle lost they kill five civilians.” In Mekelle there have been many fights. Everytime during the battles in Mekelle and nearby districts they lost, they had been intimidating the doctors and civilian patients. The soldiers intimidate by announcing that they will kill more people in revenge.”
- Reported from a source in Mekelle that young women working in the eating places, cafeterias, restaurants and bars are vulnerable to abuse, due to the curfew at 18:00 a.m., leaving the places open only for the soldiers. The girls have no one to protect them.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 30 January)

- Qatar demands an investigation regarding the Somali men who had been offered jobs as security men in Qatar but were tricked and sent for training to Eritrea, from where they were sent to fight alongside Eritrean troops in the war in Tigray, Ethiopia.
- France says in a statement that it is “extremely concerned by the gravity of the humanitarian and food crisis in Tigray and reiterates its call to the Ethiopian government to facilitate access to the region – including the Hitsats and Shimebba refugee camps – by the UN and humanitarian organizations.”
- The statement from France reads that “Repeated and consistent allegations of serious human rights violations in the Tigray region cannot be ignored. France urges the Ethiopian authorities to facilitate independent investigations and to take the legal actions they had announced.”
- The French statement applauds the UN action and welcomes the EU efforts.
- Medecins sans Frontières reports that “around 80 or 90 percent of the health centers that we visited between Mekele and Axum were not functional”. The centers had no staff and had suffered robberies.

Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best know/ledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eepe.be any additional information and corrections.

Links of interest

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2839919946263622&id=2198016757120614

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/story/ethiopia-violence-tigray-causes-untold-suffering>

https://www.dohanews.co/amp/qatar-calls-for-investigation-in-case-of-somali-youth-tricked-into-fighting-in-eritrea?__twitter_impresion=true

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/ethiopia/news/article/ethiopia-situation-in-tigray-29-jan-2021>