

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 73 - 01 February 2021

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Reported war situation (as confirmed per 31 January)

- Mr Debretsion, ousted leader of the Tigray regional government, who left Mekelle after the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) started an offensive on the capital, made a statement. He calls the war in Tigray 'a genocide'. Debretsion defended the 'constitutional right' of the Tigray people to hold democratic elections and he denounced the 'collective punishment' for the exercise of this right.
- Debretsion addressed the people of Tigray and also the international community. He stated: "It is imperative that you fully grasp the magnitude of the atrocities being committed by the Ethiopian and Eritrean aggressors as well as other foreign powers. They are attacking the people of Tigray to exterminate them with bullets and weaponized hunger. The international community must recognize its responsibility and exercise its maximum efforts to bring these criminal aggressors Abiy Ahmed and Isaias Afewerki [committing grave crimes against humanity] to an international court."
- Reported that six young girls were raped by ENDF soldiers in Mekelle city and threatened to not report it to anyone or even seek any medical care. But one of them came to get medical help and fled after hearing they were looking for her at her coffee shop (a small cafe like place for drinking traditional coffee) without the termination of her treatment. She said: "when we asked them why they are raping us, while we are all Ethiopians and brothers and sisters, they said your father is Dr. Debretsion and ours is Dr. Abiy. We are not all the same."
- Report that women working in the mill house were raped in Mekelle, kebele 17. The ENDF soldiers went into the establishment, scared the men off and raped the women while they were at work.
- Report that in Mekelle, 'Ayder' sub city, women aged 18 and 20 were raped by Ethiopian defense forces in broad daylight.
- A doctor in Axum reported that people are scared to assist and help rape victims. The Eritrean and ENDF soldiers shot people who try to assist when women cry and try to escape the raping soldiers. Not only people who try to help but also people who see the rape scene by accident are shot to death. Because of this, it has become a custom in Adwa and Axum to not give help even when you hear women cry out loud for help in time of rape and danger.
- Witness states that Eritrean soldiers in Tigray abuse Tigray citizens, stating their mission is to kill all citizens over 7 years of age: "You are all an ungrateful bunch of lice. If we followed orders, all of you above the age of 7 would be dead. That is the mission we were given. We were told to exterminate you – all of you. If you don't stop crying – we will kill the children too."
- Reported from Mekelle: people observe that Ethiopian soldiers leave the city in great numbers in an ordered way. It is said that they will be replaced by soldiers who are now deployed to inner Tigray.
- Reported from Mekelle that there is heavy fighting near Samre. There is an increase in the number of Eritrean soldiers in Wukro, and there are fewer Ethiopian soldiers, who seem to retreat.
- Fierce fighting between ENDF allied forces and Tigray regional forces reported around the Kola Tembien area, according to TMH.
- In the Tembien area front most of the ENDF allied forces are destroyed and some are on the run towards Mekelle and others are surrounded by Tigray regional forces, according to TMH.

- TMH reports that artifacts and holy books of two monasteries (Asura Metira - recently renovated by GIZ and Michael Barka) found in Atsbi Wenberta district have been completely looted and destroyed by Eritrean troops.
- Reports that four divisions of Eritrean forces (29, 53, 71 infantries, and 49 mechanized) led by General Eyob (aka 'Halibay') are now roaming in the Central areas of Tigray and they are looting and killing civilians.
- Eritrean Brigadier Gen. Eyob "Halibay" Fessahaye was jailed for alleged corruption in the early 1990s; after having been in jail for five years (during which time he carried out two attempts of suicide), he was released and eventually promoted to command the Eritrean Special Forces, Esayas elite commandos, and was in charge of coordination with the Office of President Esayas.
- A list of names has been compiled of 166 Tigrayan civilians allegedly killed by Eritrean troops in Aksum across different villages in an indiscriminate killing in what is called a 'door-to-door' search and shooting spree as well as from an artillery shelling by Eritrean troops invading on Axum across different villages. The list shows 158 men (6 priests), 8 women and 2 unnamed relatives. A list is published of 1031 'verified' names of civilians killed in Tigray. The list is available on <https://tghat.com/victim-list/>
- Hatespeech published on 27 October 2020 by an Amhara activist on tiktok - a week before the war in Tigray started, states the intention of a collaborative action between Eritrea and Amhara to overthrow Tigray and divide Tigray between the two parties.
- The translation of the hate speech message reads: "We will deinstall/disintegrate and give half of it [Tigray] to Eritrea. We will bring Axum to Amhara and give the rest to others [Eritrea]. Where the fuck will you go after? If Amhara is strong, we can do this. We can divide Tigray for the two of us. We bring Axum to us and the other we give to Asmara. Then Tigrayans will be eliminated entirely after that. It is over, whether you like it or not. If you don't submit to the feet, to what you deserve, you will see, we will do this. You will return Axum [to Amhara], and we will give the other part to Eritrea. And we can, we can do this, it's only about time."
- Unconfirmed reports in social media that the Ethiopian Telecom server in Tigray (Mekelle) has been transferred to Asmara, Eritrea. This is confirmed in the location registered on-line (Maekel region).

Reported Regional situation (as confirmed per 31 January)

- Three Sudanese merchants have been kidnapped by an Ethiopian militia group consisting of seven men in Gadarif state. The militia raiding party is now demanding a ransom of 3.6 million Sudanese pounds after seizing the men 7km inside the Fashaga triangle.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 31 January)

- Eritrean psycho-therapist and human rights activist Selam Kidane analyses the background to the "cruelties" committed by the Eritrean troops in Tigray: "Many around the world are baffled by the accounts of cruelty that is being perpetrated by the Eritrean army as consistently reported from victims across Tigray."
- Kidane states: "It has been sudden, totally unexpected and extremely brutal, perpetrated against people who are to all intents and purposes (innocent) kin. Victims ask 'why?' Fellow Eritreans are baffled and many in the international community ask 'how?' How is it possible that a young army of mostly conscripts who were forcibly recruited from across Eritrea perpetrate a level of cruelty that is seldom seen?"

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Links of interest

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55877939>

<https://eritreahub.org/dr-debretsion-gebremichaels-statement-30-january-2021>

<https://eritreahub.org/the-horrors-of-the-tigray-war-eyewitness-accounts>

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10225718337922520&id=1152580470&sfnsn=mo

<https://selamkidanedotcom.wordpress.com/2021/01/31/issias-afworkis-army-in-tigray-from-impotence-to-omnipotence/>