

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 187 - 14 July 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 13 July)

- The offensive by the Tigray Defense Forces in Southern Tigray named “Operation Tigrayan Mothers” has succeeded in liberating the Southern city of Alamata.
- Soon after the town of Alamata was captured by Tigray forces, Getachaw Reda, spokesperson of the Government of Tigray, was seen visiting the town on 13 July.
- Fierce fighting between Tigray defense forces and ENDF allied Amhara forces was also reported in Western Tigray.
- The town of May Tsebri in Tselemti Woreda is controlled by TDF.
- More pictures of TDF forces using captured ENDF military vehicles. These include weaponized trucks, tanks and armoured personnel carriers.
- New clashes are being reported near Mai Aini and Adi Harish, the remaining Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray. Two others were already destroyed earlier in the conflict.
- According to witnesses this morning the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) were controlling the environment of the Mai Aini camp and near Adi Harish Camp, and some refugees said when they started to escape from May Ayni Camp the TDF soldiers asked them to return back to the camp because outside the Camp it is very dangerous.
- Information from Eritrea appears to indicate that Eritrean refugees abducted from Tigray and taken to Eritrea are being killed by Eritrean soldiers.
- Video-material published on <https://youtu.be/UPcnZJdFfOQ> was obtained concerning a chemical weapons (white phosphorus) attack by Eritrean troops on civilians in Tigray.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 13 July)

- Witnesses told The Associated Press (AP) that thousands of Tigrayans are being detained and their businesses closed in cities across Ethiopia in a new wave of ethnic targeting by Ethiopian authorities.
- The detentions follow the dramatic turn in the war last month when resurgent Tigray forces marched into the regional capital, Mekele and routed Ethiopian soldiers out of Tigray.
- An earlier wave of detentions followed the start of the war in November after months of tensions between the government and Tigray’s leaders.
- Meron Addis, a 32-year-old attorney who has raised money for food and other aid to people in Tigray, told AP that two plainclothes police officers came to her home in the capital, Addis Ababa, on June 28 and accused her of storing weapons.
- “Then dozens of uniformed officers searched the place without presenting a warrant,” she said.
- She met several other Tigrayans while in custody and was released a week later. Police told her she was helping the “junta,” a common term used by authorities for the Tigray fighters.
- “You are causing friction between the government and the people of Tigray by posting pictures on Facebook of children and victims of the war, hunger and rape,” she said they told her.
- Another detainee who was released last week told the AP that several dozen other Tigrayans were held in a center in the outskirts of the capital.

- "At first we were told that we were suspected of having links with the (Tigray fighters). Once in jail, they began accusing us of sending money to support terrorists and vowed we won't be released unless Ethiopian prisoners of war under the control of the (Tigray forces) are released," he said. "None of us were brought to court."
- AP also said the new wave of mass detentions has not been publicly acknowledged by security officials.
- The governmental Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), however, said it is monitoring the detentions of Tigrayans and media workers suspected of links to the situation in Tigray.
- "Such measures aggravate the public's concerns on the risk of ethnic profiling," said EHRC.
- A letter from Tigrayan lawyers to the EHRC, obtained by the AP, said the fate of thousands of people remains unknown.
- "Hundreds of Tigrayan businesses in Addis Ababa, including restaurants, bars, cafes and other places, have been closed and sealed with no apparent reason other than the claim of security concerns," the letter reads.
- The letter concludes: "This campaign against Tigrayans must be stopped because it is a dangerous practice that violates the rights of citizens without sufficient evidence."
- One lawyer, Tesfalem Berhe, told AP that he has compiled a list of 103 Tigrayans detained in the capital in the past few weeks.
- "Many were taken at shops, cafes and bus stations because their IDs showed their ethnicity or because they were speaking Tigrinya," he said.
- "They are disappeared," he said, estimating that tens of thousands have been detained. "They are not given access to their families and lawyers. ... There is no allegation of crime. It is purely ethnic profiling."
- Reported that ethnic Tigrayans were killed in Kobo and Mersa towns of the Amhara regional state.

International Situation (per 13 July)

- The U.N. Human Rights Council passed a resolution expressing deep concern about abuses in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray and calling for the swift withdrawal of Eritrean troops which it said were "exacerbating the conflict."
- "What is happening in the Tigray region in Ethiopia is appalling," said Ambassador Lotte Knudsen, head of the EU delegation to the United Nations in Geneva which brought the resolution. "It is imperative for the Human Rights Council to be able to address this situation."
- The EU text passed in a vote with 20 countries in favour, 14 against and 13 abstentions. Council member Eritrea voted against the resolution. Ethiopia was not present.
- More than a dozen amendments brought by China, Venezuela and Eritrea - including a crucial one that would have removed a reference to Eritrean troops - were all rejected by the Council in separate votes.
- Chinese delegate Jiang Duan, who voted against the EU resolution, told the Council that the resolution had "major defects" and would "further complicate" the situation in Tigray.
- Joseph Borrell, EU High Representative, said that despite the announcement of a ceasefire by the government of Ethiopia, Tigray is still facing a serious humanitarian crisis.
- "We are afraid that Tigray is going to be faced with a serious humanitarian crisis with almost one million eight hundred and fifty thousands at risk of famine and ongoing use of violence against civilians and rape as a weapon of war," he said.
- He also called on EU member states for solidarity in providing donations to support the population in Tigray.
- "Tigray region had been cut off from the rest of the world following the destruction of critical infrastructure of transportation which could bring the region to a risk of mass famine," he added.

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Links of interest

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-rights-council-passes-resolution-calling-eritrean-troop-withdrawal-tigray-2021-07-13/>

https://apnews.com/article/africa-race-and-ethnicity-racial-injustice-b1a97f2569592f499565bfb6e673dc3d?utm_medium=AP_Africa&utm_source=Twitter&utm_campaign=SocialFlow