

Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

No. 364- 02 February, 2023

Europe External Programme with Africa is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peacebuilding, refugee protection, and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EEPA has published extensively on issues related to the 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](#). To receive the situation report in your e-mail, [click here](#). You can unsubscribe at any moment through the link at the bottom of each e-mail.

Situation in Tigray (per 02 February)

- A UNOCHA team on a fact-finding mission in Tigray was detained by Eritrean troops in Irob on 1 February, says *Tigray Today*.
- They were reportedly detained as they were taking a detour to avoid Eritrean troops, but were found and detained for several hours, before being sent back.
- More than 300 trucks loaded with grain-related goods transported from Addis Ababa to Tigray were stopped by Amhara authorities and Fano in North Wollo, report multiple sources.
- The Amhara troops have allegedly been charging 20.000 birr per truck, add sources.
- According to *Dimtsi Woyane*, the 300 trucks were ordered to return to Addis Ababa after four days.
- *Access Now* states that “many people” in Tigray do not yet have digital access and remain shut off from the internet and digital services.
- “many people in Tigray still remain digitally cut off, and those who have regained some access are largely struggling with slow speeds and limited 2G services,” the organisation states, calling on the Ethiopian government to commit to an “urgent timeline” for restoration of services.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 02 February)

- The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) criticized Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for promoting “illegitimacy” in addressing the division within the church, reports *Mereja.com*.
- In a meeting with his cabinet on Tuesday (31 January), the PM proposed that the Holy Synod of the EOTC and a group of Bishops, who broke away from it, should negotiate.
- The church issued a statement yesterday (1 February) which described the remark of the PM as “tantamount to interfering in the affairs of the church.”
- According to *Borkena*, the church is vowing to stage demonstrations if the PM continues to support the “illegal group and fails to enforce laws.”
- The Ethiopian army suffered 254,000 deaths in the war with Tigray, Field Marshal Berhanu Jula is said to have stated in a meeting with commanders last week. This figure excludes deaths among the militia, thought to be even higher.
- Rights groups raise concern about Ethiopia’s new biometric ID system, set to be fully rolled out by the end of 2025. They warn such a system can be easily misused in a country with deep ethnic tensions.

Regional Situation (per 02 February)

- The regional summit in Mogadishu to discuss fighting al-Shabaab, in which the leaders of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia took part, was concluded. Eritrea did not participate.
 - The meeting issued a statement calling for measures aimed to defeat al-Shabaab militarily, financially, and ideologically.
-

- The countries “agreed to jointly plan and organize a robust campaign at the frontline states level”, and to “destroy Al-Shabaab on multiple frontlines aiming at the key strategic Al-Shabaab strongholds across south and central Somalia”.
- The Summit statement called for the lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia by the end of 2023.
- Somalia announced earlier this week it has sent 3,000 new Somali soldiers to Eritrea for training. Soldiers have also been sent to Uganda, and 6,000 more will be sent to Ethiopia and Egypt.

International Situation (per 02 February)

- The *Clingendael Institute* issued an alert warning the EU to avoid hasty re-engagement with Ethiopia. “While the cessation of hostilities is a welcome development, the EU and its member states should be careful not to blindly reward a deal that was born out of the starvation of an entire region,” it states.
- It states that re-engagement should be “guided by the prerequisites for lasting peace in Ethiopia, rather than by geopolitical competition.”
- Clingendael urges the EU to condemn human rights violations and push for investigation; condition the engagement on actual implementation of the CoH Agreement; and involve alternative stakeholders.
- Europe is under pressure to normalise relations with Ethiopia as Chinese and Russian influence increases, states Horn expert and journalist Martin Plaut. Plaut states that Germany and France have been pushing the European External Action Service to create a roadmap for normalisation.
- *Splendor* is organising the hybrid event ‘Alarm Bell for Tigray’ on 10 February 2023. A panel of speakers will draw attention to the atrocities committed in Tigray.
- A former WFP country director for Ethiopia claims the international community declared famine in Tigray with insufficient evidence.
- Former UN Humanitarian Chief Mark Lowcock says he continues to support the IPC report which concluded famine took place.
- Aid workers told Devex that they saw alarming cases of malnutrition, and one worker stated “The region was specifically put into a situation whereby collecting this kind of data was impeded.”
- The Global Society of Tigrayan Scholars (GSTS) called for transparency, inclusiveness, tolerance, and responsibility in the process of forming an interim administration in Tigray.
- In its statement GSTS said “the strategic objectives of the Tigrayan political community, including that of the interim administration and those who will participate in it, should be to ensure the non-repetition of genocidal war against the people of Tigray”.
- Russian news states that Ethiopian Airlines is increasing its flights to Russia from this summer on.

Links of interest

[Twitter: Tigray Today](#)

[Facebook: Tigray Update](#)

[Facebook: Dimtsi Woyane](#)

[After years in the dark, Tigray is slowly coming back online](#)

[Ethiopia’s new biometric ID system raises concerns of deadly ethnic profiling](#)

[EOTC blames Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for promoting “illegitimacy”](#)

[Ethiopian Church threatens to stage a nationwide peaceful demonstration](#)

[A statement of Somalia Neighbouring States Summit](#)

[Twitter: Radio Erena](#)

[Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Europe’s Stance on Ethiopia](#)

[Clingendael Alert: Europe’s re-engagement with Ethiopia](#)

[Tigray ‘famine’ was ‘overt politicization,’ says former WFP official](#)

[A statement from the Global Society of Tigray Scholars. GSTS](#)

[Alarm Bell for Tigray](#)

Disclaimer: All information in this Situation Report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge 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@eepea.be any additional information and corrections.