

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 103 - 15 March 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 in Tigray (as per 14 March)

- Eritrean youths have been taken during razzias in Asmara, as soldiers perform house-to-house searches in the last days. Locals understand that these are sent to Tigray to assist in military action.
- Reported that ENDF soldiers have shot five civilians in Wukro town, three reportedly died. Locals understood this to be a retaliation by ENDF soldiers for attacks by Tigray regional forces. The Prosperity Party administrator (Amahadari) of the Woreda Kilte Awla'ilo, responsible for the area up to Abreha wa Absbiha, was taken by Tigray regional forces.
- The soldiers were randomly shooting at youngsters in the streets. Wukro is in shock and completely deserted. Everyone runs home.
- UNOCHA report says the humanitarian situation in Tigray remains extremely concerning, with conflict continuing to drive displacements of people and reports of some villages completely emptied.
- OCHA states clashes continue to be reported in Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern and Southern zones, where social services have reportedly collapsed.
- The report says the vast majority of health centres have been vandalized, destroyed or burned, and many health personnel have not been paid and are reportedly being threatened by armed actors, further delaying their return to work.
- "There is ongoing looting of health facilities, including in Southern Tigray and it is hindering the health response, as partners are discouraged from providing medical supplies. People with chronic diseases and pregnant women are particularly affected," added OCHA report.
- The reports said in Western Tigray tens of thousands of people have been displaced from the area allegedly on ethnic grounds. Since November 2020, Western Tigray has been under control of Amhara forces during which there have been reports of ethnically motivated violence and forced displacement.
- "Attacks on civilians and infrastructure in Central, North Western and South Eastern zones, including house-to-house searches accompanied by indiscriminate, extrajudicial killings and gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread," said the OCHA report.
- Amdom Gebreselassie, vice head of the public relations bureau and Alula Habteab, head of construction, road and transportation bureau of the provisional interim administration of Tigray have been removed from their office, probably because of statements they made on the problems in Tigray.
- Amdom previously called for an independent investigation into atrocities committed in Tigray and that Amhara and Eritrean soldiers had committed crimes against civilians in Tigray.

- Alula released a briefing detailing the destruction that has taken place in Tigray and said previously that “foreign armies” were causing destruction in Tigray.
- According to Amdom, there is a major disagreement about the fate of Western Tigray. Many in the interim administration want the zones returned to Tigray. They are not administered by Amhara, and there have been many reports of ethnic cleansing taking place there. Amdom claims that others within the Administration want the issue forgotten, due to “pressure from above”.
- Director of Tigray Languages Academy, Dr. Daniel Teklu Reda, has been arrested by the Ethiopian military in Mekelle. No reason for the arrest has been given.
- Researchers at the University of Ghent have published an assessment of the humanitarian situation in Tigray. It includes maps of estimated control of the different parties in the conflict.

#### Reported international situation (as per 14 March)

- The US has announced that it would not be resuming most of its aid to Ethiopia. While some food and health programmes will receive assistance, most funding for other sectors, including the security sector, remain suspended.
- The Ethiopian government “vehemently opposes” accusations that it has been involved in ethnic cleansing or that ethnic cleansing has taken place in Tigray. It says that it has started an investigation into the claims, and has contacted the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the African Commission for Human rights.
- US Secretary of State, Blinken, spoke to UN Secretary General Guterres about the need for a permanent ceasefire and a durable political settlement in Tigray.
- A spokesperson of the US State department has confirmed that the statement by Blinken that “ethnic cleansing” took place in Tigray is the official US position.
- The US UN ambassador has said that the international community cannot let the situation in Tigray deteriorate further. She also calls on all sides to stop the fighting.
- Following their visit to Tigray, the European Representation in Ethiopia and the Swedish Embassy in Ethiopia have said that they are concerned about the human rights situation in Tigray.
- The ICRC has reiterated its concern about the situation in Tigray, stating that there is no “visibility” of the situation in rural areas and believe that food supplies are at a critical level.
- It says that it is scaling up operations and has delivered supplies to 8 hospitals in Tigray. It has also provided emergency supplies to 9000 households in Tigray.
- Senior European diplomats have agreed on a list of individuals who will be hit with new sanctions due to Human rights violations. It includes Eritreans. The list, which includes a dozen names from Eritrea, Russia, China, North Korea, Libya, and South Sudan will be put for approval by ministers on 22 March.
- According to diplomatic sources, Ethiopia has recalled Eshetu Dessie, its ambassador to Ireland: “If the Irish government continues its negative role, the Ethiopian government will make a decision to cut diplomatic ties with Ireland and might close its embassy,” said the sources.
- Ethiopians and Eritreans rallied in the U.S and Europe to protest against any intervention in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. They were also thanking Eritrea for supporting the operation in Tigray.

- Tigray Academic diaspora in Europe have signed an open letter saying that the African Union and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission should not head the investigation into the atrocities that have taken place in Tigray. They say that neither organisations have demonstrated independence so far.

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@eepa.be any additional information and corrections.

**Links of interest**

<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349824181\\_Tigray\\_Atlas\\_of\\_the\\_humanitarian\\_situation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349824181_Tigray_Atlas_of_the_humanitarian_situation)

<https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-linda-thomas-greenfield-at-a-un-security-council-high-level-open-debate-on-conflict-driven-hunger/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-usa-assistance-idUSL1N2LA20A>

[https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-moves-closer-to-sanctions-for-human-rights-violations-in-6-countries/amp/?\\_\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-moves-closer-to-sanctions-for-human-rights-violations-in-6-countries/amp/?__twitter_impression=true)