

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 105 - 17 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 16 March)

- Tigray interim regional administration women's bureau said more than 500 women have been raped in Mekelle, Adigrat and its environs between December and February alone.
- According to the bureau, most of the women were raped by Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers.
- Tigray regional interim administration's communication bureau called on women around the world to condemn the act and bring the perpetrators to justice.
- Sources say Ayder referral hospital in Mekelle is admitting hundreds of fresh rape cases since yesterday.
- The head of the task force to respond to the Tigray war, General Yohannes, has told diplomats that it was "a dirty war" and was affecting everyone, especially the defenceless.
- General Yohannes also said that it was unlikely that atrocities have not happened in Tigray. He further said that he did not see how a military approach alone would end the conflict. "I know very few and exceptional conflicts or violence...or fighting, let me say... that have ended only by gun. Very few," Yohannes said.
- The General said other "mechanisms" would need to be considered, potentially including negotiations and calls for a ceasefire. However, he didn't mention a specific proposal. "I believe this is the way out. I don't think we will escape this process," Yohannes added.
- The spokesperson for the Amhara regional government said that Amhara is taking control of 10 semi-autonomous areas in Western Tigray. They expect the decision to be ratified shortly by the House of Federation.
- The head of the interim administration in Tigray has protested and said that Amhara militias need to leave Tigray immediately, stop committing atrocities, and stop occupying land.
- There have been reports, including from the US government, that ethnic cleansing is taking place in Western Tigray. Ethnic Tigrayans are being forced to leave their homes, and killed if they refuse.
- According to TMH, a jet fighter was shot down in Southern Tigray.
- AFP reported that the conflict in Tigray is intensifying. People the agency spoke to, say that abuses by Ethiopian soldiers "fuel a steady flow of civilian casualties" and stoke anger towards Abiy.
- The Agency has also reported multiple massacres that occurred in Wukro over the last few months. Eritrean soldiers routinely passed through the town, plundering and killing people. By Early December 81 had already been killed in the town. 18 more have been killed in a recent massacre by Ethiopian soldiers, also killing children.
- In another incident, AFP reported that Eritrean soldiers opened fire on civilians in Agula, after a Tigrayan attack.

- At the start of the conflict, the hospital in Wukro was shelled, destroying 75% of the hospital's facilities. As a result, many people have had to wait for months to receive treatment. The hospital has reopened, operating at a limited capacity. Newly wounded people continue to arrive.
- The Addis Standard reported that tensions are starting to run high with Oromo refugees. Many were forced out of their homes in Ethiopian Somaliland, and had been promised to be resettled. This however has not happened.
- The Oromo refugees say that instead they have found themselves in a situation where aid is not being provided by the government, but there are no jobs either. Children are also reportedly being given inferior education. The refugees say that they have been forgotten. Tensions are building up between them and the local population. Integration has, as a result, become difficult.

#### Reported situation in the Horn region (as per 16 March)

- The Africa Institute for Security Studies (ISS) published an article on the conflict between Somalia and Kenya, threatening the stability in the Horn region. Both countries have a maritime boundary disagreement, which has intensified over the last months. Somalia has cut diplomatic ties with Kenya.
- The ISS warns that a conflict could pit different countries in the region against each other, especially as there are already several conflicts in the region. Somalia has recently received support from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Sudan, and Egypt are at odds with Ethiopia over the GERD, and Sudan has repeatedly clashed with Ethiopia over its own border conflict in Al-fashada.
- It says that IGAD is too weak and distracted to effectively tackle to Somali-Kenyan conflict. International actors, and the AU especially need to step up and take robust action to avoid conflict. The AU also needs to take up a greater role in the Horn.
- The UN special envoy to Sudan, Volker Perthes, has said that he is deeply concerned about the evolving situation between Sudan and Ethiopia. Both sides have built up their military forces on the border and have clashed repeatedly over the disputed area. The Special Envoy said that the increase in activity has created a “serious risk for miscalculation and escalation”.
- He calls on Ethiopia and Sudan to de-escalate and come to a peaceful resolution.
- Perthes also warned about the deteriorating economic situation in Sudan. The country has seen an inflation of 304% in January, and has high unemployment and poverty rates. He said that 13 million Sudanese, a quarter of the population, is projected to soon require humanitarian aid.
- IGAD has said that it will continue to work closely with Ethiopia to ensure stability in the region.

#### Reported international situation (as per 16 March)

- Dominic Raab, the UK Foreign Minister, has said that the UK has communicated to the Ethiopian government the importance of unfettered access to Tigray. He is also worried that the improvements that have been made in Ethiopia in the last three decades are in danger of being lost.
- Raab also said that it is important to galvanise the international community to take action on Tigray.
- Asked about Sudan’s request to be involved in the GERD negotiations, a US spokesperson said that “We continue to support collaborative and constructive efforts to resolve the disagreement on the GERD.” and encourage the “resumption of a productive dialogue”.

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#### **Links of interest**

<https://addisstandard.com/in-depth-analysis-three-years-of-broken-promises-anger-compound-oromo-idps-displaced-after-violence-ravaged-oromia-somali-regions/>

<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/kenya-somalia-dispute-threatens-an-embattled-horn-of-africa>

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14460.doc.htm>

[https://sg\\_news.yahoo.com/fighting-continues-tigray-town-reels-035756466.html?soc\\_src=social-sh&soc\\_trk=tw&tsrc=twtr](https://sg_news.yahoo.com/fighting-continues-tigray-town-reels-035756466.html?soc_src=social-sh&soc_trk=tw&tsrc=twtr)