

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 115 - 30 March 2021

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Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 29 March)

- Reuters has published stories of Tigrayans from Western Tigray. Tens of thousands have been forced out of their homes and sent to central Tigray, where a lot of fighting is still taking place.
- Reuters interviewed the IDPs, chased away from Western Tigray. The IDPs say that Amhara officials summoned entire villages in February and said that Tigrayans needed to leave, otherwise they would be killed.
- Mulu Nega, the federally appointed head of the Tigray interim administration, has said that “western Tigray zone is occupied by the Amhara militias and special forces, and they are forcing the people to leave their homes.” However, Amhara officials deny these claims.
- Amhara claims that the territories they are seizing have been historically theirs. Tigrayans refute these claims by saying that the region has been inhabited by both ethnicities and that the Ethiopian constitution demarks them as being Tigrayan.
- Other reports also indicate that Amhara militias have been systematically removing Tigrayans, not Amhara people. They are also urging Amharic people to move into the region and to take over the abandoned houses.
- OCHA has indicated that a 1000 people are arriving from Western Tigray in Shire everyday, with 45 thousand having fled since february. The NRC said last week that between 140,000-185,000 arrived over a two week period since March.
- Reuters interviewed 42 Western Tigrayan who say that they have been evicted in mass. One witness said that “If you don't leave the area within two days, you will lose your lives”. Others said that Amhara gunmen were rounding Tigrayans up.
- These witnesses also said Amhara militias have systematically looted the entire countryside.
- Before the conflict started there were more than 180 thousand people with noncommunicable diseases in Tigray. Those diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, or pulmonary disease. A severe shortage of medicine has made it difficult to provide sufficient basic medicines such as insulin and anti hypertensive drugs.
- The bad state of hospitals and medical facilities in Tigray after four months of fighting has made it even more difficult to provide for those people who need it.
- Six people reportedly died due to lack of insulin. The number could be higher.
- The Eritrean exiled journalist, Abraham T Zere, wrote an opinion piece in Al Jazeera questioning how long President Isayas Afwerki would be able to hold on to power.
- He argues that the Withdrawal agreement, which Eritrea has yet to confirm, puts a lot of pressure on President Isayas. If he stays, he has an international problem. However, retreating could also create new problems, as Tigrayan fighters will be able to reassert control over large parts of the Tigrayan land. This could lead to a protracted fight on the border between the TPLF and the Eritrean army.

- Moreover, there have been signs of unhappiness in Eritrean forces. They are afraid that they will end up being stuck in the mountainous Tigrayan landscape, unable to retreat back into Eritrea, while taking heavy casualties due to heavy fighting.
- Abraham T Zere also argues that Prime Minister Abiy is looking for a scapegoat, and is thinking about “throwing Isayas under the bus”. The PM recently admitted that Eritrean forces had committed atrocities in Tigray.
- Reports of an unknown number of Oromo ethnic members of the ENDF who were stationed near Humera, western Tigray have fled to Sudan.
- In an interview with TMH, TPLF’s Executive Member, Getachaw Reda, has confirmed the fresh deployment of Eritrean soldiers to Tigray in the last three days.
- Tigrayan students refused to stand for the Ethiopia National Anthem during Addis Ababa Science and Technology University graduation ceremony in protest of the atrocities in Tigray.

Eritrean withdrawal agreement(as per 29 March)

- EEPA has received testimonies of people in Tigray.
- The first video is that of a mother who survived the Mai Kadra massacre with her pregnant daughter. According to the refugee, the massacre was carried out by Fano Militia. She says that they had to hide in the bush for a month, during which the daughter miscarried. They had to travel to Mekelle to receive medical treatment.
- Another is the testimony of a young man from Axum who was shot three times by Ethiopian troops in early February. He had fled to Mekelle at the beginning of the conflict, but was returning to Axum.
- A woman tells the story of how Eritrean soldiers entered her village Adichilla in Smret district and shot her entire family. Her mother, brother, nephew and uncle were all killed.
- An Adigrat University student from Tanqua Abergele in Tembien, says that Eritreans shot him multiple times while he and his family were asleep.
- A woman was raped by a group of five Eritrean soldiers. She was kidnapped and brought out of Adigrat. She was held together with other women, enough to fill a “minibus”. The woman was raped multiple times over the course of the following days. She says that one of the women that was captured with her was pregnant and gave birth. The Eritrean soldiers killed the newborn son in front of her. They also killed her other son.
- When the soldiers released her, she was injected with something to make her fall unconscious. They then instructed her to say that Ethiopian troops had committed the rapes or else she would be killed.

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Links of interest

<https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/you-dont-belong-land-dispute-drives-new-exodus-in-ethiopia-tigray>

<https://news.trust.org/item/20210329095809-1r62s/>

<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2021/02/24/the-health-crisis-in-ethiopia-war-ravaged-tigray/#:~:text=Before%20the%20civil%20war%2C%20between,and%20depended%20on%20food%20aid.&text=In%20January%202021%2C%20severe%20acute,of%2070%2C000%20children%20at%20risk.>

<https://www.tghat.com/2021/03/29/more-than-180-000-people-with-noncommunicable-diseases-in-tigray-are-either-dying-at-home-or-in-great-risk/>

https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/opinions/2021/3/28/can-eritreas-afwerki-hold-on-to-power-after-the-tigray-war?__twitter_impression=true&s=04