

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 131 - 21 April 2021

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Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 20 April)

- Fierce fighting between Ethiopian and Eritrea allied forces and Tigray defense forces was reported in Central and Northwestern parts of Tigray.
- Ethiopian MI-35 helicopter gunship was shot down by Tigray forces near Abi-Adi, Central Tigray. The pilot, Col. Lemma Tafese, deputy commander of the Eastern Air Base Division was reportedly killed.
- Reported that the newly appointed mayor of Wukro town, eastern Tigray has been killed.
- The Office of the Interim Administration of Tigray says the Amhara region government is relocating displaced ethnic Amhara's from the Metekel zone to Westren Tigray.
- The Velocity Textile Factory in Mekelle was completely looted and destroyed by ENDF allied forces.
- Reported that aid workers who were stopped by Eritrean troops in Adigrat, Tigray are being told that: "We don't care if you work for the UN or USAID, we will burn your cars if you go beyond this point."
- A recent CARE assessment found that the food situation in a number of areas of eastern Tigray is truly alarming, with little or no agricultural inputs available for people to recover over the coming months.
- CARE Ethiopia Country Director, Esther Watts said: "This is an area that was already suffering from food security issues before the conflict, with amongst the worst malnutrition and stunting rates in the country even beforehand."
- Watts also said northern and central parts of Tigray were hit by the locust swarms last year and this means that people in the region have no harvests to live off and nothing to plant during the upcoming planting season, leaving them in a truly dire situation.
- "These impacts are compounded by the psychological trauma and fear faced by household members on a daily basis," added Watts.
- Watts further says people urgently need food and nutrition support. Households in eastern Tigray rely heavily on livestock, daily labor and petty trade. The continued instability and fear of displacement and looting means many are not yet ready to begin reinvesting in other livelihoods.
- Many respondents in eastern Tigray told CARE that their immediate needs include food and nutrition support, non-food items (such as mattresses, blankets, kitchen utensils and jerrycans), health services, agricultural inputs, and, ultimately, peace.
- A woman interviewed by CARE said; "We move with our lives in our hands. A person's life is like a plastic bag worth 10 cents, like something you don't try to catch when the wind is taking it."
- A group discussant from eastern Tigray told CARE that: "We don't know where to go, all places are like fire. It is better to die than live like this."
- "I saw my daughter very troubled one day and tried to understand her problem and she told me she has nothing to use for her menstruation and I told her to tear a part of the bed sheet we have and use it," said a female group discussant.
- Another group discussant said: "We have seen worse than death and it doesn't matter if we die."

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (as per 20 April)

- Clashes between people belonging to Ethiopia's two largest ethnic groups, the Oromo and Amhara, killed at least 18 people late last week.
- Jemal Haasen, head of the Amhara region's Jile-Timuga district of Oromo Special Zone says the latest incident happened in the north of the country, Ataye town in Amhara region after Amhara's security forces killed a shopkeeper.

- "Then everyone went to their house and brought their rifles and that is how the clash began," he said, referring to civilians fighting Amhara security forces.
- He also said: "Only in one health post, I have seen 53 people who were injured, and 18 people killed. All of them are from Oromo ethnic groups."
- Protests were held in multiple cities and towns of the Amhara regional state denouncing reports of target attacks against the Amhara community.
- Protesters were carrying banners denouncing the attacks as well as the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) with crowds chanting "it doesn't represent us."
- The protests came in the wake of the latest violence in the Oromo Special zone, South Wollo and North Shewa zones of the Amhara region, which are now under the federal army command post.
- Many protesters were chanting messages denouncing Prime Minister Abiy who is increasingly being blamed for failing to stop the attacks.
- Some carried banners blaming PM Abiy for the multiple assassinations of senior regional officials including the president Ambachew Mekonnen and the regional attorney general Migbaru Kebede.

Reported Situation in the Horn region (as per 20 April)

- Sudan called for the intervention of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to dissuade Ethiopia from carrying out the second filling of the GERD before concluding a legally binding agreement.
- In the letter to the UNSC, Sudanese Foreign Minister Mariam al-Mahdi said Ethiopia's decision to unilaterally carry out the second filling will deepen the crisis and miss opportunities to reach an amicable solution.
- Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed said he was willing to negotiate with stakeholders in Somalia's political crisis in order to find a solution.
- Through his Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Farmaajo said the federal government of Somalia welcomes the African Union (AU) to facilitate the talks.

Reported International situation (as per 20 April)

- The EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, has discussed with the Ethiopian foreign minister, Demeke Mekonen and conveyed his grave concern over the critical humanitarian situation in Tigray and urged further improvements of the humanitarian access.
- He also urged the withdrawal of the Eritrean forces and called for cessation of hostilities.
- The Biden Administration voiced increasing concern about the reported atrocities committed in Tigray.
- Emily Dakin, USAID official said: "Humanitarians absolutely need unhindered access to populations in need, and we are concerned that there are populations that we haven't yet been able to reach."
- Dakin said members of the U.S. Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), have not directly experienced conflict, but ongoing fighting makes it challenging to ensure that we are able to support our partners to have the safe and consistent access they need to really be able to respond to some of the pretty dire humanitarian needs that we're seeing.
- Member of the UK parliament, Rachel Hopkins urged the disgraceful human rights abuses and gender-based violence (GBV) in Tigray must be stopped.
- Education Cannot Wait (ECW) announced US\$1 million in emergency education grant financing to benefit 20,000 children and youth impacted by the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Tigray region.

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Links of interest

<https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/tigray-ethiopia-we-have-seen-worse-than-death-and-it-doesnt-matter-if-we-die/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-violence-idUSKBN2C62ED>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-raising-alarm-looming-humanitarian-crisis-ethiopia-war/story?id=77068798>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-protests-happening-in-multiple-cities-in-amhara-region-denouncing-reports-of-targeted-attacks-against-amhara-community/>

<https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article69462>

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/somalia-president-calls-african-union-mediation>