

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 137 - 28 April 2021

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](#).

Eritrean presence in Tigray (as per 28 April)

- USAID says that it has received credible reports that Eritrean soldiers are wearing Ethiopian army uniforms. They also say that the Eritrean presence in Tigray “remains unchanged”.

Fighting in Ethiopia (as per 28 April)

- According to local authorities in Amhara, Tigrayan defence forces launched an attack in the Wag Hemra zone, which borders Tigray.
- Tigrayans say that the attack was aimed at Amhara Special Forces and was successful. However, according to local authorities, Amhara Special Forces were able to repel the attack.

Situation in Ethiopia (as per 28 April)

- AP has published a story on how thousands of ethnic Tigrayans have been detained by Ethiopian authorities outside of Tigray, accusing them of treason and holding them for months without charges.
- This story comes after months of reports of ethnic profiling and harassment of Tigrayans in the country.
- One person AP spoke to on a smuggled phone, said that he is being detained with 400 other Tigrayans, and that they have not had access to any lawyers. Family members are not allowed to visit either.
- The repression is especially severe on military personnel. According to an estimate the AP received, 17 thousand Tigrayans were in the Ethiopian military when the conflict began. They have been detained.
- However it is not only the military. Some are soldiers who are currently working as teachers and nurses, others lawyers and airline employees. Dozens of priests and deacons were also detained for a month.
- The detentions of Tigrayans is happening across the country. Another person the AP spoke to said that 1500 are being detained in Mirab Abaya, South Ethiopia.
- The people are being held in cramped quarters, and are only receiving one meal a day.
- A leaked video which AP saw and verified, showed a senior military official saying: “We had to clean out our insides. ... Even if there may be good people among them, we can’t differentiate the good from the bad. To save the country, we made it so they were excluded from doing work.”
- The hundred Ethiopian peacekeepers of Tigray origin deployed in Darfur, who refused to return to Ethiopia, have requested asylum in Sudan.
- A court has dismissed the travel ban put on opposition politician Lidetu Ayalew by Federal and Oromia police. Lidetu is looking to travel abroad to seek medical treatment.
- He was acquitted of charges of attempting to “forcefully dismantle the constitutional order” in March, but police insisted that he was still under investigation and posed a flight risk if he was allowed to travel abroad.
- The OFC, OLF, and the armed group OLA, released statements calling for an Ethiopian national dialogue
- The OFC said that there was an economic crisis, high inflation due to the previous TPLF dominated government, and that the current conflict in Tigray was “consuming the already meagre national economic resources, while millions of people are left to starve and scavenge”.

- They also said that there was a need for an “inclusive dialogue” before the “forced elections”. These sentiments were echoed by the OLF and OLA.
- The OLA called for the postponement of the election, cessation of hostilities and constitutional reform.
- The OLA is an armed group which has been fighting the Ethiopian central government for decades.
- They suggest revamping the “judiciary and electoral system, national defence force and limiting inter-state conflict by way of clarifying the mandates of regional special forces”.
- The OLF called on the AU, EU, and UNSC, and UNHCR to intervene in the ongoing crisis as the country is “reaching a stage of high unpredictability with widespread anarchy”.
- They also said that the human rights violations in Tigray and Benishangul Gumuz region are simply “the tip of the iceberg.”

Situation in Tigray (as per 28 April)

- Aid the Church in Need, a British based organisation, reported that a priest they have spoken to reported that there is “there is rampant hunger and fear”. He also said that the situation is only getting worse and did not have “the words to describe their suffering”.
- He further stated that “there are no official public services, not enough food, no medication, no security and trust.”
- The priest reported that a lot of violence was also perpetrated against priests and sisters. Many have been threatened or killed. The priest said that church property had been “completely cleaned out by the soldiers”.
- USAID says that they have reached 1.5 million people in Tigray through JEOP (Joint Emergency Operations Program).
- USAID and its partners are also supporting 50 integrated Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs) across the region to provide critical health care services.

Reported Situation in the Horn region (as per 28 April)

- The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia has said in a letter that he is concerned about mass displacement in Mogadishu. According to him between 60 and a 100 thousand people have been displaced in the city after violence started last week.
- This adds to an already large displacement. He estimates that since January 173 thousand people have been displaced, 2/3rds because of violence. Somalia is also experiencing a drought.
- Seven people were also killed in Mogadishu following a suicide bombing in front of the police headquarters. Two soldiers and three “passers by” were among the dead.

Reported International situation (as per 28 April)

- Sudan has said that it is suspending an agreement with Russia to establish a Russian naval base in the country.
- The British Embassy in Ethiopia has corrected Ethiopian Media after several newspapers, including FANA, wrongly reported that the British ambassador had said that the current operations in Tigray were important for peace.

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Links of interest

<https://addisstandard.com/news-armed-forces-from-tigray-launch-attack-inside-amhara-region-local-officials-admit-the-attack-say-caus>
<https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-race-and-ethnicity-health-coronavirus-5f22a5aea128cbd659fbf4f810aac973>
<https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/statement-humanitarian-coordinator-somalia-concerns-over-mass-displacements-mogadishu>
<https://addisstandard.com/news-ofc-olf-call-for-dialogue-national-consensus-before-elections-ola-calls-for-ceasefire-and-preconditione>
<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-fact-sheet-7-fiscal-year-fy-2021>