

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 140 - 04 May 2021

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Reported Situation in Tigray (as per 03 May)

- Tigray Media House reported that Eritrean have been involved in interrogations and torture of Tigrayan prisoners. In some instances, they were also involved in federal police investigations in Addis Ababa.
- According to a source, civilians were taken by Eritrean soldiers while 19 others were shot.
- The former Commissioner of the Tigray Electoral Board, Muluwork Kidanemariam was speaking on TMH from the countryside. He announced that Tigray defense forces are advancing strongly and that the liberation of Tigray is not far any more.
- Sources indicate, in the last weeks, there were a lot of aid blockages by the Eritrean forces, not letting even doctors to evacuate wounded people including children and the situation is aggravating.
- Oxfam is warning that over 5 million face “extreme hunger” in Tigray.
- The conflict combined with locusts has left many farmers with nothing to plant. Experts are saying that if it does not happen now, it will not be possible to do so again until 18 months from now.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Tigray (as per 03 May)

- In a new report, the International Rescue Committee finds that “lack of access to food and sources of cash” is creating a situation where women are forced to exchange sex for an average of \$1,25. They also say that there is little reporting on these “exploitative relationships” between host communities and female IDPs.
- The conflict has also led to a spike in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) perpetrated by husbands and partners. There are also fewer social sanctions on men to prevent gender based violence from happening and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Simultaneously women fear being cast out of the community if they speak out if they talk about violence. GBV has been deprioritised in favour of other needs such as food and shelter.
- Sexual violence was not only prevalent during the first months of the conflict, but continues to be.
- The healthcare services are severely limited. The IRC also finds that for some healthcare workers, gender based violence is not an issue. Hospitals also often do not have the facilities to treat women properly. Only one hospital provided medicine to treat HIV after exposure.
- They also found that “Lack of women’s health was a consistent theme and there is evidence that pregnant women died on the way to safety and that unattended births are taking place in camps.”

Situation in Ethiopia (as per 03 May)

- Oromia Media Network (OMN) said heavy gunshots were heard at the residence of the leader of OLF, Dawud Ibssa and his house is under siege in Addis Ababa.
- The House of People’s Representatives (HPR) Ethiopia has called on TPLF and Shene to bring any evidence they have against their designation by the Council of Ministers as terrorist organizations, and to submit the evidence to the House in person within the next 48 hrs.
- The committee for the protection of Journalists published the annual survey on Journalist arrests in the world. In Ethiopia the number of journalists arrested was 7 compared to one a year earlier.
- The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) said the Ethiopian Council of Ministers’ anti- terrorism law proposal issued to categorize the TPLF and Shene as terrorist organizations is a deliberate move to armed entities in the political dialogue and to sabotage political dialogue.

- “Although we do not understand how the word Shene is used in the proposed bill, we guess they would mean Shane as they associate this word to any citizen of Oromia that does not support the Prosperity Party,” said OLF in a statement.
- The OLF added the word Shane is a sacred word in the Gada System and its administrative and cultural structures defining a wide concept of Oromo culture and traditions. Using this name for this evil purpose in anti-terrorism bill is an abuse of the word and degrading the Oromo language and culture.
- “Whatever word is used this proposal is intentionally designed to obstruct the peaceful resolution to the political crises in the country. Particularly, at this critical time, when internal forces and international bodies such as the US and EU are trying the peaceful resolution of multi-layer security and political crises that are devastating the country, it is an evil act to introduce such damaging law to enhance conflict,” added OLF.
- Further the OLF said the Ethiopian ruling group is governing the country illegally as its tenure ended on October 05, 2020. Both the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and the whole government officials have lost their mandate to rule the country.
- “Since Ethiopia is already in constitutional crises, this anti-terrorism law, even if approved by the parliament, is illegal as the Parliament itself is illegal to approve laws or to conduct national election,” said the OLF statement.
- The OLF also said: “We would like to inform the Ethiopian people and the international community that this anti-terrorism bill is particularly targeting the Oromia citizens, Benishangul-Gumuz, the Southern Nations and Peoples and the Tigrayan people who are struggling for freedom and democracy.”
- The CJP has published a story on the difficulties of reporting in Ethiopia and Tigray. The internet is routinely cut and this makes it very difficult for journalists to contact people or send pictures and videos.

Reported Situation in the Horn region (as per 03 May)

- Ethiopia has told the United Nations that Egypt and Sudan have signed a military agreement beyond the threat of war.
- In a letter signed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen and sent to the UN Security Council a week ago, says Egypt and Sudan are trying to put pressure on Ethiopia by taking the issue of GERD to international diplomatic forums, disrupting negotiations led by the African Union.
- Ethiopia’s Civil Service University Professor Endale Nigusse stated that a successful filling of the 18 billion cubic meter water in the GERD reservoir in the coming rainy season would change the course of the dam’s talks and enforce Egypt to lose its long standing hegemony.
- “The second filling of the GERD reservoir would also shift the responsibility of protecting the project to Egypt for the sake of its own safety,” he said.
- Sudanese Foreign Minister Mariam Al-Sadi Al-Mahdi said the second filling of the GERD would impact the lives of millions of people in Sudan.
- In a meeting with Congolese president and current chairman of the African Union Felix Tshisekedi, the Sudanese foreign minister stressed the importance of reaching a legally binding agreement between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the filling and operation of the GERD before the start of the second filling in June.

Reported International situation (as per 03 May)

- China is taking over the Presidency of the UNSC. The first meeting will be held on Tuesday.

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Links of interest

<https://cpj.org/attacks-on-press-2020-journalists-killed-jailed/>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/gender-analysis-key-findings-womens-exploitation-gender-based-violence-across>

<https://sokodirectory.com/2021/05/over-5-million-people-face-extreme-hunger-in-tigray/>

<https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/410484/Egypt/Politics-/Second-GERD-filling-will-impact-lives-of-millions-.aspx>