

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 150 - 19 May 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 18 May)

- A priest from the Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat says killings, abductions, and rape still occurring in Tigray.
- According to the priest, the targets for killings are men and boys, who are being eliminated by armed forces and their allies, and women and girls, who are being repeatedly gang-raped to weaken any resistance.
- "They want to annihilate Tigray. By killing the men and boys, they are trying to destroy any future resistance. They want to make sure that nobody can question their actions in the future," said the priest. "They are raping and destroying women to ensure that they cannot raise a community in the future. They are using rape and food as weapons of war."
- The priest added killings and torture are breeding nationalism among Tigrayans. He said men or boys who cannot attend school due to the war and can't find food or fear being executed were joining the rebel ranks in droves, angry over the atrocities.
- "They don't want to die of hunger or be killed like their peers. They are joining the rebels so that they can live," he said.
- An interfaith group, which includes the Catholic Church said: "Relics have been stolen, items of worship have been burned, belongings of believers have been desecrated. And religious sisters and nuns have been violated and raped, mothers and daughters have been gang-raped."
- An article by Alex de Waal in OpinioJuris says as soon as the conflict erupted, we were warned of the risk of famine. But in the face of the ruthless determinations of the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea to starve the civilian population of Tigray, the UN, AU, and donor governments have done nothing of significance.
- Alex de Waal said not only has the Ethio-Eritrean coalition massively reduced the food available to Tigrayans, but they have systematically reduced the Tigray region to a state of destitution.
- "The perpetrators of these starvation crimes are the Ethiopian federal forces, the Eritrean army, and Amhara forces," said Alex de Waal.
- Ethiopian soldiers, armed with guns and grenades, have raided Axum hospital in the Tigray region, reportedly because they spoke to CNN.
- Dimtsi Weyane (DW) International said the Ethiopian government has used an internationally banned chemical weapon (a poisonous gas) in the villages of Tigray.
- According to DW International, on 13 May 2021, an Eritrean MIG-29 fighter jet bombed the village of Azmera. Three civilians were killed and another three injured. 11 donkeys were also killed.
- Reported that Leadership member of the National Congress of Great Tigray Party's, Kibrom Berhe has been detained from his home in Addis Ababa and a few hours later he was released.
- Tghat, a website documenting atrocities committed in Tigray said after the ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans from Western Tigray, the Amhara regional government proceeds to lease and distribute their farmlands to Amhara investors.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 18 May)

- Ethiopia's top Prosperity Party official and governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), Mr. Yinager Dessie accuses the U.S. of "working to disintegrate Ethiopia."

- OCHA said in North Shewa and Oromo Special Zones of Amhara Region 358,000 displaced people were identified due to conflict and are in dire need of humanitarian assistance and healthcare services.
- Addis Standard says residents in the West Arsi zone of Oromia State have been asked to present their voters' registration card to get any official paperwork in government administration offices otherwise they will be denied service.
- Metekel Zone Communication Bureau said an MoU was signed between the Benishangul Gumuz regional state and an unnamed "armed group" that would see members of the later take up leadership positions in the region, acquire urban and rural land, as well as receive credit facilities.
- Accordingly, 2 regional, 3 zonal, and 4 woreda level positions will be made available to the members of the unnamed armed group. Urban plots for housing and rural land for farming will be made available.
- Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), the federal media regulatory authority responsible for media licensing and registration, said it has issued a "written warning" to The Associated Press (AP).
- EMA DG, Mohammed Idriss said the authority issued the written warning in connection with AP's coverage of the latest decision by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) to postpone the 6th national election.
- Mohammed said AP's reporting that the election was postponed due to the war in Tigray was far from the truth.

Reported International Situation (as per 18 May)

- The EU foreign service said that the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia's Tigray region is worse than ever since the conflict began last November, with 5.2 million people needing "emergency food assistance" to "avoid starvation."
- "Blocking humanitarian aid as a weapon of war is a grave violation of international humanitarian law," added the EU foreign service, amid previous EU threats to hold Ethiopian officials accountable by putting them under EU visa-bans and asset-freezes.
- The State Department said the U.S. is committed to end the brutal conflict in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region which has been ongoing for six months.
- It also said the U.S. would work to secure a ceasefire between the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) and the Ethiopian army which is supported by Eritrean forces.
- "The U.S. will work with our international allies and partners to secure a ceasefire, end this brutal conflict, provide the life-saving assistance that is so urgently needed, and hold those responsible for human rights abuses and violations accountable," said the State Department in a statement.
- US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman said he had held talks with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other officials, and that the country's problems could be resolved.
- Also during his meeting with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, Mr. Feltman said Eritrean troops should immediately withdraw from Ethiopia.
- The statement also said while calling for the immediate resumption of the suspended tripartite talks, "the U.S will provide political and technical support so that Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt can reach a final agreement over the controversial dam Ethiopia is building on River Nile."

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Links of interest

<https://opiniojuris.org/2021/05/18/pandemic-of-hunger-symposium-the-ethio-eritrean-hunger-plan-for-tigray-and-the-failure-of-resolution-2417/>
<https://euobserver.com/tickers/151855>
<https://von.gov.ng/2021/05/18/us-shows-commitment-to-end-ethiopia-tigray-crisis/>
<https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/local-priest-atrocities-still-occurring-ethiopia-tigray-region>
<https://addisstandard.com/news-at-least-358000-idps-in-north-shewa-oromo-special-zones-need-urgent-assistance-un/>
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<https://www.tghat.com/2021/05/18/after-ethnic-cleansing-of-tigrayans-from-western-tigray-amhara-state-proceeds-to-sale-and-distribute-their-farmland-to-amhara-investors/?fbclid=IwAR15z--oiMoi1ucqrBD5UPTeQwiOzpVVzQVtpTa6uTuXsfHCfrEuQGGu9Ahs>