

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 152 - 21 May 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](#).

### Reported situation in Tigray (per 20 May)

- USAID is saying that early warning systems are detecting a category 5 food emergency in Tigray. This is the highest it can be. Over 5 million people need urgent aid in the region. Ethiopia needs to act “now” to ensure that food can be delivered.
- Reported that Eritrean and Ethiopian troops have shelled Bora Chellena and its vicinities in Southern Tigray with heavy artillery and rockets.
- Scores of civilians were reported to have been killed and villages were destroyed including an elementary school. Dozens of cattle were also killed.
- TMH said 19 civilians were killed by Eritrean troops after they were abducted weeks earlier from Haziewn, Eastern Tigray.
- The UN Population Fund says that funds are urgently needed to assist survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Tigray.
- A 22-year-old woman told UNFPA that she “was running from place to place without food or shelter. I was in fear all the time... There was no safe place for me until I got to the safe house”.
- A social worker said that he saw “women and girls arriving here so traumatized and depressed due to prolonged suffering, distress and horrendous violence that they cry and cannot eat for days”.
- UNFPA says that gender-based violence is massively underreported and is only the “tip of the iceberg”. Even in normal circumstances, social and cultural factors ensure that women do not report rapes. A survey conducted in 2016 showed that only 23% of Sexual Assault survivors sought assistance.
- UNFPA says that only 29 percent of health facilities in Tigray are partially available to provide clinical management of rape; none are fully available.

### Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 20 May)

- Communication Affairs Head of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia said the general election is set to be held on 21 June 2021.
- The vote will not take place on June 21 in the seven constituencies in the Somali Region where complaints were lodged during the voter registration process.
- Neither will voting take place in areas where voter registration has not yet begun and where there are many IDPs. She also said that the voting process will not take place on the same day in the Metekel Zone of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. Voting at these venues will be considered “outside the current set June 21”.
- It has not been specified when elections in these regions will be held.
- The election board said that the election had been extended to allow election officials to receive training in connection with the election, counting votes, as well as the announcement of results.
- Ethiopia said GERD will begin a power generation trial run during the upcoming rainy season.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia stated that the construction of GERD has reached 80 percent and the second filling of the dam will be carried out as per the time schedule.

- The Scholars Council in Amhara National Regional State said in a letter to the U.S Embassy in Addis Ababa that the ‘belligerent posture’ taken by the U.S State Department only serves to put undue obstacle to the cause of justice and lasting peace in Ethiopia.
- The letter added taking unwarranted positions and attempts to impose unjust ‘ultimatums’ and ‘musts’ will subsequently result in unending conflict and massive humanitarian crises in the Horn region.

#### Reported Situation in the Horn (per 20 May)

- Al-Arabiya said there was a clash between Ethiopia and Sudan forces. The Sudanese army has regained control of 20,000 hectares of land after a fierce battle with Ethiopian militias.
- The foreign ministry of Egypt has rejected any unilateral actions of Ethiopia’s GERD, including second filling, before reaching an agreement with concerned parties.
- Sudan Motion reported the entry of Egyptian ground forces into Sudan as part of an agreement between Sudanese forces and Egyptian armed forces.

#### Reported International Situation (as per 20 May)

- The US Senate has passed a unanimous resolution calling for Eritrean troops to withdraw from Tigray.
- The resolution, sponsored by Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman James E. Risch, also condemns human rights violations committed by the Eritrean military and called on Sec State Blinken to ensure a “full, independent, international investigation into all reports of human rights violations, abuses, and atrocities”.
- The resolution also calls on Ethiopia to “release all opposition leaders, supporters, and activists detained on the basis of their political activity and views as well as journalists detained on the basis of their reporting, and respect the rights of all Ethiopians to free expression and political participation, without discrimination based on ethnicity, ideology, or political affiliation.”
- As well as “convene a credible and countrywide process of national dialogue and reconciliation inclusive of all nonviolent political parties, ethnic communities, religious groups, and civil society organizations in Ethiopia to work toward the sustainable resolution of grievances and chart a democratic and peaceful path forward for the country;”
- The US has also called on “all armed actors in Ethiopia to safeguard the lives and activities of humanitarian workers throughout Ethiopia” and to “unhindered, consistent, and safe access for aid”.
- It comes following the killing of a USAID worker by Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers after he clearly identified himself as an aid worker.
- The U.S Embassy in Addis Ababa said it is monitoring calls on social media for protests at several embassies around Addis Ababa on 21 May and has cancelled consular services on that date.
- Earlier this week, Professor Mukesh Kapila stated that Genocide is being committed in Tigray.
- Lord David Alston stated that “Rape and sexual violence against women is being relentlessly used as a weapon of war against the women and girls of Tigray”.
- Professor Jan Nyssen of Ghent University reports that “numerous women have been raped. The victims hide themselves and do not speak, but nurses cannot hold their tears, and the whole town knows the top-three of rapists: 1. (and by far) Eritrean soldiers, 2. Ethiopian soldiers, 3. Civilian perpetrators.”
- On Saturday Helen Clark, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, said “There is evidence of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Western Tigray. If carried out with the intent of eliminating Tigrayans, it may be classified as genocide, Taken all together, the serious crimes being committed against Tigrayans, including massacres of civilians of all ages, may meet the definition of genocide.”

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#### **Links of interest**

<https://www.davidalton.net/2021/05/17/a-recording-of-todays-webinar-on-tigray-will-be-made-available-here-is-the-urgent-appeal-which-david-alton-made-to-dominic-raab-to-table-a-resolution-at-the-un-security-council/>

<https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/senate/resolution/97>

<https://ethiopia.unfpa.org/en/news/urgent-funding-needed-assist-survivors-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-tigray>

<https://et.usembassy.gov/deaths-of-humanitarian-workers-in-ethiopia/>