

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 163 - 07 June 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 organizations, 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 06 June)

- There are rumors that 40 tons of Phosphorus chemicals have arrived in Mekelle Airport on 06 June 2021 based on internal sources. This appears part of the preparation for what is called the “final” war.
- Reported that the Ethiopian government was sending reinforcements and heavy artillery to Tigray.
- The ENDF and allied forces have blocked the road to Wejirat Woreda, Southeast of Tigray, to aid workers who are trying to provide life-saving food aid to the residents.
- Multiple sources indicate fresh deployment of Eritrean forces to the Tigray region and vast rotations of both Eritrean and ENDF soldiers.
- Eritrean defense forces conducted a meeting with the residents of Wukromaray, Central Zone of Tigray on 02 June 2021. They informed residents that they are to be administered by Eritrea from now onwards. A similar meeting was held in Selekleka town and a similar issue was announced.
- Reported that Eritrean troops have looted beehives and modern agricultural equipment from the town of Selekleka near Shire, Western Tigray.
- The interim government of Tigray appointed head of the Bureau of Agriculture says Eritrean troops have ordered farmers not to leave their house and not plough their farmland.
- “Eritrean troops slaughtered and ate all farm animals and burned all the feed. They also destroyed fruits like Papaya so that farmers will have nothing to eat,” said Abadi Girmay, head of the bureau.
- He also said: “The Eritrean troops took all the farmers' food and crops as much as they could carry and added water to the leftover to make it unusable. They have also burned down farm equipments.”
- A report by the Regional Emergency Coordination Center said Ethiopian and Eritrean troops have been looting beneficiaries' rations without reservation. Ethiopian troops have also looted two trucks of The Relief Society Tigray (REST), a non-governmental organization, from the town of Hawzen.
- The Regional Emergency Coordination Center added that humanitarian workers have been arrested by ENDF allied forces on different occasions. And 16 Woredas are inaccessible due to blockades by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.
- The report further said buster pump stations, water utility offices and water trucking operations in many towns of Tigray are still occupied and used as military bases by Eritrean and Ethiopian troops.
- Al Jazeera report says in the fight between ENDF allied forces and Tigray defense forces, civilians, and especially children are suffering.
- The report said more and more children are caught up in shelling in Hawzen and other nearby areas, with at least 32 admitted to the Ayder hospital in Mekelle for blast injuries from December to April.
- The report added that thirteen had limbs amputated.
- Haftom Gebru, a 12-year-old boy from Hawzen, was wounded by shrapnel in the fighting during Orthodox Easter. An artillery shell hit a pile of stones in the family compound that then ricocheted in the boy's direction. “I am so sad I can't explain it,” said his father. “I feel it deeply.”
- Another 17-year-old, Haftom Gebretsadik from Freweini near Hawzen, was also wounded by an artillery round that struck his home in March. “I am very worried,” he said. “How can I work?”
- In an interview with TMH (Tigrai Media House), a captive ENDF soldier says the Ethiopian and Eritrean troops are killing civilians and committing other atrocities in Tigray.

- He said ENDF is dominated by ethnic Amhara soldiers and those from Oromia, Southern Nation, Nationalities and People (SNNPR), Gambella, Somali, and Afar were used as cannon fodders.
- “Ethnic Oromo members of the ENDF were seen in suspicion. And ethnic Amhara military commanders were misleading the ENDF soldiers by giving wrong information about Tigray forces,” he added.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 06 June)

- The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) says the Eritrean army is terrorising and brutally persecuting civilians in the Borena Zone of Oromia regional state.
- “According to the information received from local residents, the Eritrean and Ethiopian forces are carrying out brutal atrocities on civilians in three Woredas of the Borena zone including Liban, Gumii Eeldallo, and Negelle towns,” said the OLF.
- The OLF said on 04 June 2021, a large number of Eritrean soldiers in Ethiopian defense force uniform arrived by helicopters in the Liban district of Borena and invaded the city and surrounding areas.
- “Immediately after they arrived, these foreign troops started harassing herders and other civilians in the region and also deployed to other nearby cities of Eldello and Negelle Borena for the same atrocities,” said the OLF.
- The OLF added that the Eritrean troops were confiscating mobile phones, cash and looting private belongings from local civilians.

International situation (per 06 June)

- The U.N humanitarian chief says famine is imminent in the Tigray region, warning there is a risk that hundreds of thousands of people or more will die.
- Mark Lowcock said the economy has been destroyed along with businesses, crops, and farms and there are no banking or telecommunications services. “We are hearing of starvation-related deaths,” he said.
- “People need to wake up,” Lowcock said. “The international community needs to really step up, including through the provision of money.”
- Lowcock also said: “There are now hundreds of thousands of people in Tigray in famine conditions. That’s the worst famine problem the world has seen for a decade since a quarter of a million Somalis lost their lives in the famine there in 2011. This now has horrible echoes of the colossal tragedy in Ethiopia in 1984.”
- He further said there are more than a million people in places controlled by Tigrayan opposition forces and “there have been deliberate, repeated, sustained attempts to prevent them getting food.”
- “There are places controlled by the Eritreans and other places controlled by militia groups where it is extremely difficult to deliver aid,” he added.
- InterAction urges the UNSC and all member states to call for an immediate halt to International Humanitarian Law violations by all parties to the conflict in Tigray and to push for immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to the populations most in need.
- InterAction said the findings and recommendations of the ongoing investigations into civilian harm and human rights abuses—including sexual and gender-based violence—need to be urgently shared with the public to allow for independent review.
- InterAction also urged the UNSC to hold an open session on the deteriorating crisis in Tigray.
- A Letter sent by Lord Alton and Fiona Bruce MP, co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eritrea, to the chairs of the House of Commons International Development Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee, calls for the launching of a full joint inquiry into Tigray.
- EEPA is holding a Webinar on Voices From Tigray Brutalities against Religious leaders, Holy Places, and Heritage in Tigray on June 8th, 14:00-16:00 EAT, 13:00-15:00 CET, 07.00-09.00 U.S East. The registration link is: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_w_2_EZNvQqa0luRWLdBWeQ

Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. The publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand the potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or the impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eepe.be any additional information and corrections.

Links of interest

<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/6/6/children-suffer-as-fighting-in-ethiopia-tigray-drags-on>
<https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-africa-ethiopia-famine-business-242450fa4a93719809688f83ecb9b2ac>
<https://eritreahub.org/british-all-party-parliamentary-group-on-eritrea-calls-for-a-full-inquiry-on-tigray>
<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/interaction-statement-looming-threat-famine-tigray>