

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 164 - 08 June 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 07 June)

- Reuters has published an in-depth piece on the massacre that took place in Mai Kadra at the start of the conflict. They interviewed over 120 people and cross-checked those accounts with 44 unpublished testimonies. The massacre happened in mid-November 2020.
- There have been accusations that a Tigrayan captain, identified as Capt. Kassaye Mehar, directed youths initially, from four Amhara witnesses. Reuters sent questions to Capt. Kassaye via the TPLF. TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda said that Kassaye is not known and denied that the TPLF targeted Amhara civilians in Mai Kadra.
- Subsequently, following that, Amhara started “revenge killings”, and targeted ethnic Tigrayans in retribution. Amhara forces also forced Tigrayans out of their homes and seized Tigrayan homes and the surrounding farmland.
- At least 767 people were killed in Mai Kadra, Western Tigray.
- Reuters also reported seeing “fleets of mini-buses packed with household goods and mattresses strapped to the roofs traveling from Amhara into western Tigray. New Amhara settlers were among the passengers.”
- Amhara officials and representatives have said that they have taken control of Western-Tigray, and plan to resettle up to “half a million Amhara’s” there. The spokesman of the Amhara regional government said “There is no space called western Tigray because this area is part of the Amhara region.”
- On 7 November 2020, Amhara militias reached a town named Division 75km south of Mai Kadra. There they set fire to houses and told people to get out if they wanted to live.
- By the 9th tensions were running high in Mai Kadra after the fighting had been coming closer. One Amhara said that he saw many young Tigrayans walking around with knives and machetes and checking people’s identification documents. Shortly after, Tigrayan mobs started attacking Amhara living in the city, targeting mostly men.
- Seven Amhara residents said that members of the town militia were with the mobs and appeared to be directing some of the killings. Militiamen and local police were also blocking roads leading in and out of Amhara neighbourhoods, shooting at people trying to escape.
- The ENDF and other forces entered the city uncontested on the morning of the 10th. Tigrayan fighters had by then fled the town. Attacks on Tigrayans in the city started that afternoon.
- Amhara militiamen then systematically started driving Tigrayans out of Western Amhara. Entire villages have been destroyed, cities and highways have been renamed.
- Many Tigrayans have also been executed. Amhara soldiers rounded up men, put them on trucks, and brought them to Tekeze river, where they were executed.
- There were instances of both Amhara and Tigrayans helping each other escape while the massacres were taking place.
- The acting Tigrayan Head of the city Education Office has said that all schools are due to reopen.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 07 June)

- Prime Minister Abiy said Ethiopia is facing challenges from traitors from within as well as outsiders.

- At an inaugural ceremony of the Tana Beles Sugar factory, the PM said: “Two enemies of the country’s prosperity” were identified.
- He made a reference to ‘traitors’ during the Ethio-Italian war while talking about those he accused of betraying the nation.
- He also talked about outsiders who are working to inhibit Ethiopia from standing on its feet. “Ethiopians should prioritize getting rid of traitors.” the PM said, explaining how getting rid of traitors would lessen attacks from outside.
- He further spoke about the importance of GERD. “The construction of the GERD plays an invaluable role to both Egypt and Sudan,” he said, adding “They too will benefit from it when we complete it.”
- The PM’s remarks came two weeks after the U.S announced visa restrictions for Ethiopian and Eritrean officials who are responsible for or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis in Tigray.

International situation (per 07 June)

- G. Meeks and M. McCaul, Chairman and Ranking Member of the U.S House Foreign Affairs Committee, along with K. Bass and C. H. Smith, Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Global Human Rights said in a statement that: “We condemn, in the strongest terms, the continued fighting and atrocities ongoing in Tigray and the increasing violence and human rights abuses occurring throughout Ethiopia.”
- The statement added that the conflict in Tigray has devastated local communities, displaced more than a million people, pushed over five million people into near-famine conditions, and destabilized the broader Horn of Africa region.
- “The continuation of this violence is unacceptable and humanitarian workers must be provided safe, unfettered access to the region to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable communities,” said the statement.
- The government of Ethiopia has denied that Chemical Weapons have been used.
- The U.K government said: “We are working to establish the facts. Access to the affected areas, and to verified information, remains difficult. We have consistently called for access for independent human rights investigators and will continue to do so.”
- U.S Senator Patrick Leahy says the people of Tigray are being subjected to human rights atrocities on an appalling scale, and they are being denied urgently needed humanitarian aid – aid that is being blocked by the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as well as other armed groups.
- Leahy said despite significant diplomatic efforts by the U.S and others, the parties to the conflict in Tigray have taken no meaningful steps to end hostilities or seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict.
- He added that the Eritrean government should live up to its public commitment and immediately return its troops to Eritrean territory.
- “The terrible reality today is that famine, crimes against humanity, and genocide are occurring in Tigray, and they are occurring for one reason: the complicity of government officials in Addis and in Asmara,” he said.
- He also called for an end to the atrocities, the blockades of food and other humanitarian aid, a dialogue to resolve the conflict peacefully, and justice for civilians victims of atrocities.
- The Archbishop of the Coptic Church based in the UK, his **eminence Archbishop Angaelou** will open the 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

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Links of interest

<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2021/6/meeks-mccaul-bass-smith-introduce-resolution-condemning-violence-and-human-rights-abuses-in-ethiopia>
<https://addisstandard.com/news-pm-says-local-traitors-outsiders-pose-threat-to-nations-prosperity-vows-to-fight-both/?fbclid=IwAR2UHvTCKINcrS7e4>
<https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/statement-on-the-situation-in-tigray-ethiopia>
<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ethiopia-conflict-expulsions/>
<https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/statement-on-the-situation-in-tigray-ethiopia>
<https://www.kerknet.be/kerknet-redactie/artikel/religie-en-cultuur-onder-vuur-tigray>
<https://www.davidalton.net/2021/06/07/u-k-responds-to-allegations-that-white-phosphorus-has-been-used-in-tigray-and-says-the-government-of-ethiopia-has-denied-that-chemical-weapons-have-been-used-we-are-working-to-establish-the/>