

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 169 - 15 June 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 14 June)

- FAO says as of June 2021, conflict and insecurity have displaced almost 2 million people across Tigray and into neighbouring regions.
- FAO also said over 5.5 million people in Tigray require emergency assistance, representing nearly 61 percent of the analyzed population; of whom 2 million require urgent livelihood assistance.
- “It is estimated over 90 percent of the crop harvest was lost (looted, burned and/or destroyed) and 15 percent of the region’s 17 million livestock were reported looted or slaughtered,” added FAO.
- In an AP story, the organisation describes how famine is being used as a weapon of war in Tigray.
- Witnesses describe how Eritrean soldiers took away the food from pregnant women.
- The AP team also saw Ethiopian soldiers turn away convoys filled with food and emergency supplies. The World Food Organisation said last Thursday that they are only reaching half of the people “they should be reaching”.
- Soldiers are also accused of stopping Tigrayans from planting crops, and of stealing farming equipment and livestock. One witness told AP that Eritrean soldiers came upon him as he was looking after his cattle, and shot him and both cows.
- AP says that “Farming has not stopped entirely in Tigray, but it has become a dangerous act of resistance. “ Huge craters can be found on the roads and in fields. In Abiy Adi one person told them that ““If they [Eritrean soldiers] see us plowing, they beat us. We only plow when we are sure they are not around.”
- Eritrean soldiers are also contaminating food sources and farming soil.
- Humanitarian workers interviewed in the region said that “if something did not change soon, mass starvation in the region was inevitable. “ Another said that food demand was high and “beyond our capacity.”
- Malnutrition is also severely affecting newborns. Two children in Ayder Hospital have died due to lack of food. Others are severely underweight and are not eating much.
- One woman described how she had to scavenge for food to ensure her baby survived, and hide in the bush when soldiers approached.
- In an interview with Reuters, Mark Lowcock, the UN Humanitarian Chief, has said that Eritrean forces are “trying to deal with the Tigrayan population by starving them.” He continued by saying that food was “definitely” being used as a weapon of war.
- The UN has also said that it has received reports of more than 150 Tigrayans starving to death. Lowcock says that he believes many more have died.
- Reuters also saw many people hospitalised weighing only fractions of their normal weight. One boy of 14 who hid in caves for three months only weighed 14.9 kilos.

- The UN reported that in March 1.187 children were treated for severe wasting in hospitals covering a third of Tigray. In April, the number rose to 1,723. In May, it reached 2,931.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 14 June)

- Seven National and Regional political parties have issued a joint statement complaining about the electoral process.
- They say that their candidates have been subjected to “unspeakable harassment by setting illegal conditions in various constituencies in order not to intentionally register our candidates”.
- They further stated that many people have not been able to register due to overcrowding and registration offices reaching capacity.
- They say that they tried to work with the government to improve the election infrastructure, and this to be the “first free election” in Ethiopian history. However their requests have gone unanswered.
- Ahmedin Jebel, a prominent muslim cleric who was running for the House of People’s Representatives for Jimma city has announced his withdrawal from the upcoming Ethiopian election.
- The prominent cleric was running for a Jimma seat at the House of People’s representatives (HoPR) along side two other members of the Muslim Arbitrary Committee members.
- “It is with humility and great respect that I regret to inform my withdrawal from the race for personal reasons,” he said.

International situation (per 14 June)

- In an interview, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Mission to the UN said the conflict in Tigray has impacted communities and resulted in a man-made disaster/famine and it needs to be addressed.
- Responding to why the UNSC is pushing against holding an open meeting, Amb. Linda said: “They are making a number of arguments. One, that this is a sovereignty issue. My view is sovereignty does not come into play when you have foreign troops in your country, when you people are crossing borders into other countries, and we are watching on national TV your people starve to death. And I have said and I will say here, as I have said in the Security Council, don’t African lives matter?”
- James Duddridge, Minister for Africa for the UK Government said: “There are more people in Tigray in famine than anywhere else in the world, and it is expected to get worse.”
- He told the UK Parliament that the UK government will consider an arms embargo on Ethiopia because of the conflict in Tigray.
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses concern over the crisis in Tigray and called for immediate ceasefire, full humanitarian access, human rights protection and national dialogue for reconciliation.
- The Federal Prosecutor’s Office of Brussels confirmed on 2 June 2021 that it has opened a file on various war crimes and crimes against humanity in Tigray, Ethiopia. Several Belgian victims of the war in northern Ethiopia had submitted testimonies to the Prosecutor’s Office. Their relatives were executed and property looted.
- The Union of Tigrayans in Belgium supports the complaint of the Belgian-Tigrayan war victims. Five relatives of victims asked the Federal Prosecutor to conduct an independent investigation into the war criminals within the Ethiopian and Eritrean regimes. It is possible in Belgium to try crimes against humanity, even if they did not take place in Belgium, if some of the victims are Belgian.

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