

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 171 - 21 June 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 20 June)

- Fierce fighting between Tigray Defense and ENDF allied forces was reported on various fronts in Tigray.
- In recent days, Tigray's Defense Forces have launched a strategic offensive against ENDF allied forces.
- The operation has been ongoing since 18 June.
- The operation has covered many parts of the Central, Southeastern, and Southern zones of Tigray.
- The spokesperson of Tigray Defense Forces told Tigray Media House (TMH) that the 11th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 25th, 31st and 32nd divisions of ENDF have participated in the operation.
- Further, the 21st and 32nd divisions of Eritrean defense forces have also participated in the operation.
- One brigade from the 21st division and two brigades from the 32nd division of the Eritrean defense forces have been completely destroyed.
- The spokesperson also told Dimtsi Weyane (DW) International that ENDF's 31st and 11th divisions were completely destroyed by the operation of Alula AbaNega.
- Further, commanders, senior logistics, and other staff members of the 31st and 11th divisions have been killed and captured in the operation.
- Col. Hussien, commander of ENDF's 11th division has been captured. Deputy commander, head of logistics, and personnel of ENDF's 31st division were also killed.
- In the operation, thousands have been killed and injured. And over 1,300 ENDF soldiers were captured.
- Besides, 14 (122mm) heavy artillery, 10 (82mm) mortar, 3 (type 120) mortar, 7 Zu-23, over 60 military radios, over 80 vehicles, and other ammunition were also captured by Tigray defense forces.
- The whereabouts of the commander of ENDF's 31st division remains unknown. He might be killed.
- ENDF soldiers who were stationed around Gijet, South-eastern Tigray were also completely destroyed.
- Getachew Reda, advisor to the ousted President of the Tigray government announced on his Facebook page that: "Abiy has lost two more divisions today and the Tigray defense forces officially has more artillery pieces than most of the Abiy's divisions. We have more POWs that we did bargain for."
- OCHA says the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) shows that over 350,000 people are already facing catastrophic conditions.
- OCHA also said more than 550 cases of gender-based violence, including rape, were officially reported in May. About 70 cases were against girls under 18.
- OCHA added that some 5,500 displaced people sheltering at Axum University were moved to relocation sites in Shire.
- "Population from Amhara region have been seen to have moved into the Western zone of Tigray and occupy empty houses and land in several locations," said OCHA.

Situation in the Horn region (per 20 June)

- The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the ACHPR) says on 4 November 2020 the government of Ethiopia launched a military offensive against the TPLF, which was followed by attacks on the Northern Command of the ENDF by the TPLF on the same day.
- The finding of the Commission contradicts the Federal government claim that law enforcement operation in Tigray was taken due to TPLF's attack on the Northern Command.
- The Commission also said: "In accordance with its mandate of promotion and protection of human rights in Africa under Article 45 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African

Charter),” a Commission of Inquiry on Tigray was formed and “will officially commence its work on 17 June 2021.”

- According to the ACHPR, the Commission of Inquiry will begin its work from its headquarters in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia.
- “The Commission of Inquiry has a mandate to, inter alia, investigate allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to gather all relevant information so as to determine whether the allegations constitute serious and massive violations of human rights,” said the ACHPR.

Reported Situation in Ethiopia (per 20 June)

- Ethiopia calls on the African Union (AU) to stop the Commission of inquiry on rights abuse in Tigray.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs said: “It is regrettable to note that the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights made a unilateral announcement on the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry and it was completely outside the scope of the invitation by the government and lacks legal basis.”
- The Ethiopian Immigration has temporarily suspended acceptance of E-visa and visa on arrival services effective 20 June 2021 departure from the U.S.
- Ethiopia’s foreign ministry dismissed EU special envoy Pekka Haavisto’s comments as “ludicrous” and a “hallucination of sorts or a lapse in memory of some kind.”
- Ethiopia’s leaders in closed-door talks with the EU Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa earlier this year said “they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans,” the envoy said this week, warning that such an aim “looks for us like ethnic cleansing.”
- “When I met the Ethiopian leadership in February they really used this kind of language, that they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for 100 years and so forth,” said Pekka Haavisto.
- Haavisto added: “For me, this referred to very serious human rights atrocities and crimes. If you wipe out a national minority, it’s obvious that we have to react because it looks like ethnic cleansing.”

International situation (per 20 June)

- The UK Embassy in Ethiopia says reports of forced return of Eritrean refugees and extrajudicial killings are unacceptable and called for the violence to stop now.
- US Congressman Michael McCaul says systematic crimes by Ethiopia call into question whether genocide is occurring in Tigray. Addressing US Amb to the UN, Mr. McCaul also said the Ethiopian government's behaviour in Tigray points to possible genocide.
- “As the fighting continues, there is starvation and systematic rape being used as a weapon of war. And comments from [USAID head Samantha Power] that Ethiopia is 'destroying the reproductive health of Tigrayans' really calls into question whether conditions amount to genocide under the 1948 Genocide Convention,” said Mr. McCaul said.
- The Elders called on the UN Security Council and the African Union to take urgent steps to address the unfolding humanitarian and human rights crisis in Tigray, which poses a threat to regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa.
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia and member of The Elders also said: “I call upon the AU to address the humanitarian and human rights catastrophe that is unfolding in its host country, and urge the AU Chairperson to lead regional efforts to facilitate a political solution to the Tigray crisis and prevent further instability.”

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<https://apnews.com/article/europe-ethiopia-africa-ffd3dc3faf15d0501fd87cafe274e65a>

<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>

<https://amp.thenationalnews.com/world/the-americas/us-congressman-michael-mccaul-raises-spectre-of-genocide-in-tigray-1.1242853>

<https://theelders.org/news/un-and-au-must-act-now-prevent-famine-and-end-atrocities-tigray-ethiopia>

<https://inquiry.achpr.org/elementor-536/>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-ethiopia-calls-on-au-to-stop-commission-of-inquiry-on-rights-abuse-in-tigray-says-outside-scoop-of-agreement-lacks>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-update-ethiopia-calls-claims-by-eu-envoy-irresponsible-undiplomatic-and-outrageous-lies/>