

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 174 - 24 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 23 June)

- Reported that ENDF's 13th and 20th divisions who were stationed around Agula and Wurko have been heavily attacked by Tigray defense forces. Over 100 vehicles were captured.
- The Spokesperson of Tigray defense forces told Dimtsi Weyane (DW) International that over 10,000 ENDF soldiers were killed by Operation Alula Abanega and 3,356 were captured including senior commanders.
- The Associated Press said (AP) says an airstrike hit a busy market in the Tigray region village of Togoga on Tuesday.
- Health workers told AP that Ethiopian soldiers blocked medical teams from traveling to the scene and dozens of people were killed.
- Doctors and a nurse in Mekelle told AP that they were unable to confirm how many people were killed, but one doctor said health workers at the scene reported "more than 80 civilian deaths."
- Wounded patients being treated at Mekele's Ayder hospital told health workers that a plane dropped a bomb on Togoga's marketplace.
- "The six patients included a 2-year-old child with abdominal trauma and a 6-year-old," said a nurse.
- The nurse added that an ambulance carrying a wounded baby to Mekelle, almost 60 kilometers (37 miles) away by road, was blocked for two hours and the baby died on the way.
- Hailu Kebede, foreign affairs head for the Salsay Woyane Tigray opposition party told the AP that one fleeing witness to the attack had counted more than 30 bodies and other witnesses were reporting more than 50 people killed.
- Many more were said to be wounded in the remote village that's linked to Mekelle in part by challenging stretches of dirt roads.
- "It was horrific," said an aid worker who told the AP he had spoken with a colleague and others at the scene. "We don't know if the jets were coming from Ethiopia or Eritrea. They are still looking for bodies by hand. More than 50 people were killed, maybe more."
- Health workers said on Tuesday afternoon, a convoy of ambulances attempting to reach Togoga, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) west of Mekelle, was turned back by soldiers near the village of Tukul.
- Several more ambulances were turned back later in the day and on Wednesday morning, but one group of medical workers reached the site on Tuesday evening via a different route.
- Those medical workers were treating 40 wounded people but told colleagues in Mekele that the number of wounded is likely higher as some people fled after the attack.
- "We have been asking, but until now we didn't get permission to go, so we don't know how many people are dead," said one of the doctors in Mekelle.
- Another doctor said the Red Cross ambulance he was traveling in on Tuesday while trying to reach the scene was shot at twice by Ethiopian soldiers, who held his team for 45 minutes before ordering them back to Mekelle.
- "We are not allowed to go," he said. "They told us whoever goes, they are helping the troops of the TPLF."

- Reported that an Ethiopian C-130 Hercules warplane was downed by Tigray Defence Forces near the town of Gijet.
- The warplane was reportedly transporting soldiers and weapons from the Amhara capital, Bahir Dar to Mekelle, Tigray.
- The UNHCR has released a new report on the situation in Tigray.
- Regarding the 25 thousand Eritrean refugees missing from Shimelba and Hitsats refugee camps, 8359 have arrived in Adi Harush and Mai Aini camps. UNHCR says that it has identified 13687 refugees in total.
- UNHCR and its partners are moving ahead with plans to establish a new camp in Dabat, in the Amhara region. The camp is meant to house 20 thousand refugees.
- From interviews and assessments conducted with IDPs, the UNHCR found that 74% of IDPs do not feel safe living in IDP shelters due to fear of “military or armed presence”.
- Tigrayan refugees are also continuing to arrive in Sudan. The UNHCR says that there are fewer than 30 arriving every day.
- The UNHCR also launched the Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan (CRRP). It is a multi-agency response strategy and financial requirements to provide protection services, humanitarian assistance, and development opportunities for refugees across the country.

Reported situation in Ethiopian (per 23 June)

- Ethiopian Airlines said it has resumed flights to Asmara, Eritrea.

Reported situation in the Horn region (per 23 June)

- Sudan has asked the United Nations Security Council to meet and discuss a dispute over a giant dam being built by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile.
- On Tuesday, Sudan’s Foreign Minister Mariam Sadiq al-Mahdi called on the Security Council to hold a session as soon as possible to discuss GERD and “its impact on the safety and security of millions of people.”
- In a letter, al-Mahdi called on the council head to urge Ethiopia to stop the “unilateral” filling of the dam “which exacerbates the dispute and poses a threat to regional and international peace and security.”

International situation (per 23 June)

- European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Wednesday in Berlin: “The situation in Tigray is appalling,”, noting that “today a military airstrike has been producing a lot of casualties against the civilians.”
- In a Joint press statement with Commissioner Lenarčič, the EU High representative said that the EU strongly condemns the targeting of civilians.
- “This is not justifiable in any terms and goes against International Humanitarian Law. Those atrocities cannot be justified by using the preservation of the territorial integrity of Ethiopia as an argument,” said the joint press statement.
- They also said that if the blocking of ambulances was confirmed, it would constitute a “grave violation of the Geneva Convention and of International Humanitarian Law.”
- EEPA is holding a Webinar on “The involvement of Eritreans in the war in Tigray” on June 29th, 14:00-16:00 EAT, 13:00-15:00 CET, 07.00-09.00 U.S East. The registration link is: <https://bit.ly/3qfQ335>

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Links of interest

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/23/sudan-asks-un-security-council-to-meet-over-ethiopia-blue-nile>
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