



Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 18 - 07 December

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Key information (in addition to what is already widely published)

International dimension (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- The United States withdraws all of its 700 troops from Somalia after Ethiopia withdraws 3000 troops.
- EU Commissioner, Janez Lenarčič, states that “the Ethiopian Government must allow ‘unimpeded, sustained and secure access’ for emergency relief”.
- A senior European official expresses grave concern over the agreement to allow access for humanitarian aid to Tigray, in that this only covers areas controlled by the Ethiopian federal forces and the bureaucratic requirements are “onerous”.
- Expert warns that an Ethiopian counterinsurgency campaign targeting Oromo Liberation Front splinter faction, OLF-Shene, is now spilling over into Northern Kenya.

Regional dimension (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Heavy fighting breaks out in Somalia (Halgan area of Hiran region) between AMISOM and Ethiopian forces after attempts were made to disarm Tigrayan officers of these forces resulting in the death of 21 Tigrayan soldiers and 20 Ethiopian soldiers of other ethnicities.
- Reported tension between Sudan-Ethiopia border over land dispute Sudan as the Sudanese army takes control of Khor Yabis, agricultural land owned by Sudan but contested by Ethiopian farmers.
- Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Dina Mufti, claims that Ethiopia and Sudan have agreed on a plan to immediately start repatriation of refugees that fled the conflict, back to Ethiopia.
- Wandimo Asmamo, a former general of the Ethiopian armed forces, and originally from Tigray, concerned about cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea resulting in “ethnic cleansing”.
- Hospitals in Senafe, Teseney, Barentu, and Keren (all in Eritrea) reported to be full of wounded soldiers; Eritrean government is organising a campaign to increase blood donations, says Radio Erena.
- Eritrea released 28 Jehovah’s witnesses after 26 years of incarceration. Meanwhile, hundreds of Christians and Muslims are still held in prison in Eritrea due to their religious beliefs.
- Former Eritrean Minister of Defense, Mesfin Hagos, relates that “in the run up to the current conflict, a large number of Ethiopian elite units had slowly been trickled into Eritrea as part of a security pact between Abiy and Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki.” He states that: “Hidden from public view at an ad hoc base in Gherghera, in the outskirts of Asmara,” in Eritrea, “these units were expected to be the hammer and the Northern Command the anvil to strike out of existence the TPLF.” According to Hagos the “TPLF preempted this scheme in what it called ‘anticipatory defense’, which forced both Abiy and Isaias to improvise leading to the eruption of conflict.”

Human Rights (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Unconfirmed reports that first UN observers have arrived in Mekelle.
- Editor of the Addis Standard states that the earlier reported massacre in Mai Kadra has claimed the lives of more than 600 civilians and no certainty of the perpetrators.
- Wounded refugees from Hitsats camp under international protection deported back against their will to Eritrea, speaking of killings in the camps when it came under control of Ethiopian federal forces and Eritrean military.
- Campaigns #SayNoToWar, #StopWarInEthiopia, #StopWarInTigray, #TigrayGenocide ask international community to protect refugees in Sudan from repatriation to Ethiopia against their will.
- Verified reports of ethnic profiling of Tigrayans in Ethiopia, organised and sanctioned by the state.

Military situation (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Reports from Tigray that an Ethiopian Federal government fighter jet crashed around Zana (near Shire, Tigray). This would be the third jet downed by the TPLF. (*unconfirmed*)
- Spokesperson for the TPLF, Getachew Reda, states that Tigray forces are in the rural areas and are defending their positions.

Situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Oromia's ruling Prosperity Party (PP) leader Taye Dandaa warns against annexation of land by force, stating that any border issues should be resolved through the Identity and Boundary Commission.

Situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Tigray regional President accuses Eritrean forces of mass looting. There have been numerous reports of Eritrean soldiers looting cities and dismantling entire factories and university departments. These are reportedly then transported to Eritrea.
- Report that the Ethiopian security forces seized the Dimtsi Weyane station headquarters in Mekelle. The Oromia Broadcasting Network shows the abandoned studios, recording rooms, and offices.
- Large gatherings have been taking place in several Tigrayan border towns. These are reportedly Amhara pushing for unification with the Ethiopian Amhara region.
- BBC newshour has reported that aid has been delayed due to ongoing fighting.
- A spokesman for the TPLF has claimed that tens of thousands have been killed during the conflict.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 07 Dec)

- Tigray: UN remains out of contact with Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray, and says that it continues to receive "disturbing reports" regarding the camps. World Food Program is trying to locate 50,000 refugees in the camps who were receiving food aid.
- UNHCR states that 48,000 refugees have now crossed into Sudan and that 12,000 have been relocated to Um Raquba refugee camp.

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Links of interest

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/noon-briefing-highlight>
<https://africanarguments.org/2020/12/04/eritreas-role-in-ethiopias-conflict-and-the-fate-of-eritrean-refugees-in-ethiopia/>
<https://www.politico.eu/article/ethiopia-must-open-aid-access-to-conflict-region-says-eu-crisis-commissioner/>
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/04/africa/ethiopia-war-tplf-exclusive-intl/index.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekk7-8208Yc&feature=youtu.be>
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<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-s-army-regains-control-of-border-region-after-25-years>