



Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 20 - 09 December

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

International dimension (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- Eritrean organisations call for an international day of action to stop the war in the Horn of Africa. They call for a “protest against war and forced recruitment” on Human Rights Day, 10 December - against forced recruitment of Eritreans into the indefinite national service and the war in Tigray.
- Report that Eritrean citizens in Asmara refuse to buy the looted goods offered for sale which are brought into the country from Ethiopia.
- US and other national diplomats back claims that Eritrean soldiers are fighting in Tigray, stating that there is no doubt anymore that Eritrean soldiers are fighting in Tigray. The diplomatic sources believe that “thousands” of Eritrean soldiers are engaged in the conflict.
- The Eritrean and Ethiopian governments continue to deny the involvement of Eritrea.
- Three separate United Nations security teams evaluating the situation in Ethiopia’s Tigray region have observed troops wearing Eritrean uniforms moving in the area, according to people familiar with the matter. These were spotted in different parts of Tigray. Notably in Mekelle, Shire, as well as on the Ethiopian side of the border with Eritrea.
- Three UN teams trying to enter Tigray stopped; in Humera, Bahir Dar and Dessie. These teams led by OCHA included representatives from WHO, WFP, UNICEF and other UN agencies.
- Ethiopian government admits shooting at and detaining a UN team in Tigray. Spokesman said the UN staff should not have been there and went through 2 roadblocks. The observers were reportedly on their way to check on Eritrean refugees in a camp under international protection.
- UNHCR Chief, Filippo Grandi, states that regaining access to refugees and others in need in Tigray is urgent and critical for UNHCR and humanitarian organizations.
- Norwegian Refugee Council is deeply concerned by significant constraints to aid delivery despite an agreement with the Ethiopian government last week.
- The Norwegian government announced that it will reconsider the asylum status of Eritreans who participated in celebrations of the National Service system of conscription.
- Ethiopian authorities have rejected independent investigations into the massacres committed during the conflict. An Ethiopian official, Redwan Hussein, stated that “[t]he investigation that is being undertaken by the government will be up to international and national standards.”
- The Secretary General of the UN publishes a statement raising concern about the situation in Tigray. Guterres urges the quick restoration of the Rule of Law. The UN is committed to supporting the

African Union initiative and mobilizing the full capacity of the UN to provide aid and relief to populations affected.

- Eritrean envoys sent to Sudan for a diplomatic visit.

Military situation (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- There are reports that Tigray Defense Forces have conducted an operation in Shire and Sheraro towns on 9 December and that they have taken over control from ENDF and Eritrean soldiers.

Human Rights (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- Families have stated that refugees have been kidnapped from camps in Tigray and have been forcefully returned to Eritrea.
- Ethiopian authorities resist giving in to growing international pressure to allow outside independent investigations of the massacres that have taken place in Mai-Kadra in Tigray Regional State and across other parts of the country.
- EU Commissioner of Humanitarian Affairs, Janez Lenarčič, calls for independent investigation into the massacres in Tigray, after his visit to the Um Raquba refugee camp in Sudan, hosting ten thousand refugees from the conflict.
- Elected leaders of the Tigray Regional State state that they welcome international investigations into the massacres committed during the conflict.

Situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- *Unconfirmed* report that Eritrean refugees who fled the camps for refugees under international protection in Tigray who arrived in Addis Ababa have been put into detention camps.

Situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- FANA reports that the interim government of Tigray has started to have discussions with stakeholders in Mekelle and encourages citizens to actively participate.
- Pictures showing significant destruction in the Tigray Region. Social media report Zenith hair oil factory in Shire, Tigray, is completely destroyed.
- ICRC reports that people in Mekelle, Tigray, are facing a shortage of clean water.
- Concern over fate of scholars from Mekelle University, the third ranking university of Ethiopia, as communication black-out continues in Tigray.
- Journalists have not been permitted to travel to Ethiopia's Tigray region by the Ethiopian government, despite requesting access.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 09 Dec)

- 50,000 refugees have fled into Sudan.
- Thousands of Eritrean refugees have left camps in Tigray to head to the South, away from the fighting. Refugees that remain in Adi Harush camp state that they stay up at night to prevent attacks and abductions.
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Links of interest

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/impatience-rises-aid-blocked-ethiopia-tigray-74601799>
<https://en.connection-ev.org/article:eritrean-organizations-call-for-an-international-day-of-action-against-war-and-forced-recruitment>
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-08/suspected-eritrean-troop-sightings-suggest-wider-ethiopia-war>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/8/warnings-intensify-as-badly-needed-aid-still-not-reaching-tigray>
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/08/africa/ethiopia-tigray-refugees-sudan-border-intl/index.html>
<https://eritrea-focus.org/norway-government-to-review-asylum-status-of-eritreans-who-celebrate-conscription/>
<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29272/behind-the-tigray-ethnic-conflict-ethiopia-politics-of-federalism-and-a-fight-for-identity>