

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 21 - 10 December

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

International dimension (as confirmed per 10 Dec)

- EU High Representative, Josep Borrell, states that in “talks with Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, of Sudan, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and with Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, I renewed the EU’s support to any initiative of IGAD and the African Union to address the situation” in Ethiopia.
- Catholic Bishops in Africa have, under the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), joined Bishops in Eastern Africa in voicing concerns about the violent conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray region, urging for “immediate laying down of arms”, “All parties in the conflict to resolve their differences amicably through open dialogue, and in a spirit of brotherhood, respect, understanding, and reconciliation” and “local, national, and international security personnel and agents to safeguard the lives of all the people, especially civilians, and to restore peace in the region.”
- United Nations security teams reported observing troops wearing Eritrean uniforms in the Tigray region. Three persons stated that the UN teams had seen Eritrean respectively in western Tigray, en route to the town of Shire; in the capital of Mekelle and west of the city; and on the roads that lead from Eritrea’s border to the northern Tigray towns of Adwa and Adrigat.
- UN SG Guterres states there is no proof of the presence of Eritrean troops inside Ethiopia: “I confronted the (Ethiopian) prime minister with that question, and he guaranteed to me that they have not entered the Tigrayan territory, that the only area where they are is the area that corresponded to the disputed territory between the two countries that in the peace agreement was decided to give back to Eritrea.”
- In a letter to Ethiopian students, a representative of the Ethiopian Embassy in Belgium states that “at this moment, the situation is far from over as the most wanted leaders of the TPLF remain fugitives.”
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, states fears that “the situation in Ethiopia is exceedingly worrying and volatile and – as I had warned – is spiraling out of control, with appalling impact on civilians” and voicing concerns on Ethnic profiling of Tigrayans.
- US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Tibor Nagy states: “we strongly urge all parties to safeguard humanitarian workers in and around Ethiopia’s Tigray region. We continue to urge immediate and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Tigray to ensure food and medical supplies quickly reach those in need.”
- International media are quoting the Ethiopian government, stating “it doesn’t need a babysitter” as a concern grows that support may be needed to calm the situation and create a humanitarian corridor.

- During a two-day visit to Kenya, PM Abiy challenges President Uhuru to work on the security of the Kenyan northern region. He states this will help transform it, given its potential and encouraging communities along the border to help security forces deal with armed groups from Al Shabab and fighters from the Oromo Liberation Front, believed to be operating in the area.

Regional Situation (as confirmed per 10 Dec)

- The Somali PM commits to elections after the parliamentary elections deadline was missed on 1 december.

Situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 10 Dec)

- An Ethiopian opposition party, Oromo Federalist Congress, says it will find it “extremely hard” to take part in coming elections in Ethiopia under existing conditions. It says that many of its members are in jail or restricted and that offices remain inaccessible to them. They urge for more democratic elections.
- Media Fact check organisation concerned about use of social media for disinformation purposes by Ethiopian government.
- Ethiopian diplomats warn against the wide-spread campaign of “misinformation and fake news” stating: “the current operation is neither a civil war nor directed against innocent Tigrayans. The Federal Government is trying to bring to justice treasonous TPLF leaders.”
- Further evidence of ethnic profiling emerging as business owners of Tigray origins are being harassed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in a leaked memo with proof of profiling and targeting specific businesses of Tigray origins.
- The Addis Standard Editor, Medihane Ekubamichael, was released from prison. He was arrested earlier in November and charged with “attempts to dismantle the constitution.”

Situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 10 Dec)

- One million out of six million residents have fled their homes in Tigray as a result of the conflict.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 10 Dec)

- Ethiopia SOEFactCheck twitter sends: “We have received credible intelligence that TPLF [Tigray People’s Liberation Front] operatives have infiltrated refugees fleeing into Sudan to carry out missions of disinformation. We caution media entities & international organisations to thoroughly investigate & verify information they receive.” Retweeted by PM Abiy, government accounts and “influencer” account, with more than half a million followers. Analysts concerned about disinformation campaign.
 - Qatar Charity (QC) joins relief interventions to shelter Ethiopian refugees fleeing the conflict in Tigray region to Sudan in the Um Rakuba camp in Qallabat in eastern Sudan.
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Links of interest

- https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/88375/ethiopia-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-b-orrell-latest-developments_en?fbclid=IwAR0g6ywgcRT3ufEDHj9opFl0ayG86jBVGct8Z-jvc98bmO_DkeHK6n3Sqzo
- <https://imbisa.africa/en/articles/3oVwqAUqYlcm68hwvzs/view>
- <https://www.africa-express.info/2020/12/09/polveriera-tigray-i-soldati-etiopici-sparano-e-arrestano-operatori-dellonus/>
- <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/impatience-rises-aid-blocked-ethiopias-tigray-74601799>
- <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/2478/bishops-in-africa-demand-immediate-laying-down-of-arms-in-ethiopias-tigray-region>
- <https://en.connection-ev.org/article:eritrean-organizations-call-for-an-international-day-of-action-against-war-and-forced-recruitment->
- http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-12/10/c_139577070.htm
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-08/suspected-eritrean-troop-sightings-suggest-wider-ethiopia-war>
- <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/08/africa/ethiopia-tigray-refugees-sudan-border-intl/index.html>
- <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29272/behind-the-tigray-ethnic-conflict-ethiopian-politics-of-federalism-and-a-fight-for-identity>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iz22s8gUGJCr8UYmq50mvwR6df8QTkF2WE-HtpqTcwU/edit>
- <https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-12-08-a-glimpse-into-the-future-of-government-propaganda/>