

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 25 - 14 December 2020

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Military situation (as confirmed per 14 Dec)

- Further confirmation that fighting is ongoing around Ala'isa and Hagere Selam, Tigray.
- The road between Mekelle and Adigrat is interrupted, travelling is impossible.
- Reports from the ground of severe bombardments in Tembien, Tigray, by the ENDF.
- The TPLF is reportedly conscripting in Mekelle.
- Refugees arriving in Sudan give witness reports of the presence of the Eritrean military in the refugee camps in Tigray (Ethiopia). A witness reports: "Some of the soldiers were Eritreans, some of them were (Ethiopian) federal soldiers." Referring to the attack on the refugee camp in Tigray, he states: "They were shooting at all people. All -- women, men, children." (AFP)

International dimension (as confirmed per 14 Dec)

- UN Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Ms. Pramila Patten, and the Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Ms. Karen Smith, expressed concern over escalating ethnic tensions in Ethiopia and recent military clashes in Tigray, and killing of many civilians.
- Norwegian Refugee Council Secretary General Jan Egeland calls for more action and less words to provide humanitarian support in Tigray.
- PM of Sudan visited Ethiopia. Visit lasted 2 hours, although the Ethiopian PM office had announced it would last 2 days. Sudanese PM offer to mediate the war rejected by Ethiopia.
- The Ethiopian House of the People Representatives Board accused Sudan of helping the TPLF and perpetrating attacks on civilians.
- Non-Tigrayan students from Mekelle University were evacuated to Addis Ababa via Asmara (Eritrea). The non-Tigrayan students left Mekelle by bus and were driven to Eritrea, Asmara, for further onward journeys.
- During the bombing of Mekelle, 29 November, the Eritrean government helped Adigrat students travel to Ethiopia via Asmara airport. News site showed videos of students.
- UNHCR Filippo Grandi is "deeply alarmed" about the situation of Eritrean refugees in Tigray, stating: "Over the last month we have received an overwhelming number of disturbing reports of Eritrean refugees in Tigray being killed, abducted and forcibly returned to Eritrea."

- Eritrean refugees in Tigray left without support as most UNHCR staff were evacuated for security reasons. Ethiopia restricted access to Tigray. Humanitarian workers have been killed.
- William Davison, ICG, states Eritrea may no longer want Ethiopia to give protection to Eritrean refugees, seen as dissidents or deserters from indefinite national conscription in Eritrea.
- Analysis published at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum concludes the necessity of Foreign governments and human rights organizations to “ follow the lead of the African Union to support peace processes between the central government and regional groups and condemn violence against civilians” in an effort to decrease the risk of atrocities in Ethiopia.
- Eritrean artist Eseyas Debesay presents a song celebrating the demise of the TPLF.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 14 Dec)

- The number of refugees that arrived in Sudan from Tigray has passed 50,000.
- Refugees arriving in Sudan give witness reports of fighting in the refugee camps in Tigray: "Suddenly soldiers came to our camp and they started shooting," Kheder Adam told AFP in a Sudanese refugee camp. "The situation was very serious. There was a lot of gunfire."
- Eritrean refugees separated from their families in camps in Tigray are arriving in Sudan .

Human Rights in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 14 Dec)

- Al Jazeera published accounts of survivors of the Mai Kadra massacre. The survivors recount TPLF militias and police killing non-Tigrayans. In refugee camps in Sudan, other refugees say that they had been targeted for being Tigrayan. AP interviewed both ethnic Tigrayans and ethnic Amhara, and both say that they were being targeted. Some Tigrayan refugees say they recognised neighbours committing atrocities. AP says it is possible that both sides took part in massacres in Mai Kadra and surrounding areas. The UN calls for an independent investigation.
- The Early Warning Project, a project that assesses the risk of mass atrocities, estimates that “there is a 6.5%, or approximately 1 in 15, chance of a new mass killing beginning in Ethiopia in 2020 or 2021. Ethiopia ranks 9th highest-risk among 162 countries.”

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 14 Dec)

- Increase phone traffic with some places in Tigray. The network in Tembien is still shut down.
- Ethiopia has started a campaign to disarm civilians in Tigray. The newly installed administration has called on all Tigrayans that own weapons to bring these weapons to security services.
- Looting is still taking place around Tigray. Reportedly a dialysis machine was taken out of Mekelle hospital. Twenty young people attempting to stop this were shot.
- Looting from shopkeepers continues and leads to exorbitant prices for food in Mekelle.
- PM Abiy visits Mekelle, reporting that telecom and electricity are being reinstalled.
- There is no electricity and no fuel for generators, according to citizens’ communication.

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Links of interest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTZCFtXBXCc&feature=youtu.be>

https://amp.france24.com/en/live-news/20201212-new-exile-for-eritrean-refugees-fleeing-ethiopia?__twitter_impression=true&s=04

<https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org/countries/ethiopia>

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/violence-musicians-murder-risk-of-atrocity-crimes-ethiopia>