

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 29 - 18 December

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Evolving situation (as confirmed per 18 December)

- The Government of Sudan has accused Ethiopia of ambushing Sudanese troops on Wednesday. 4 soldiers died. Large military reinforcements deployed by Sudanese army along the border with Ethiopia after clashes in which Sudanese military were killed and wounded, reports Al Sharq newspaper.
- Nine priests killed in the Church in Adi Aweshi, Tembien, Tigray, by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.
- Historic Al Nejashi Mosque (the first mosque in Africa) was first bombed and later looted by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops. Tigrayan sources are saying that people have died trying to protect the mosque.
- Reported that people have been killed in Oromo and Amhara region. The killings were carried out by separatist groups. It fuels fears that the conflict will spread to wider Ethiopia as ethnic tensions rise.
- Eritrean troops looted St. Mary, a Catholic church in Wukro, Tigray, and stole cars from the compound.
- The TPLF reportedly used tanks after the beginning of military actions on November 4th. ENDF forces were besieged in some camps for 10 days, after which they surrendered.
- Two doctors report heavy shelling at the start of the offensive. The shelling came from Eritrea, the border of which was 200 meters away. Following the shelling one doctor says that he counted 15 dead and 75 wounded. The second doctor says that they received 200 casualties of which 50 were dead on arrival. They mention a pattern of shelling, then arrival of government soldiers, followed by Amhara militias and special forces.
- The doctors also reported that they had to evacuate the wounded on trucks as it became too dangerous to stay. Subsequently they had to hide for two days as shooting and killings were taking place nearby. They eventually fled to Sudan.
- People have walked to Sudan covering distances of 300 km, reports BBC, and they saw many dead civilians on the way. A doctor states: "I have patients who say they saw Eritrean forces in Tigray who committed atrocities, burning houses and destroying farmland."
- Calls for investigation in the war crimes committed by all parties involved in the ground and air offensive which started on November 4th.
- Increasing concern of 'troll farm' attacks to silence reporting on the situation.

International dimension (as confirmed per 18 December)

- An official in Juba, South Sudan, states that the TPLF elected president, Debretsion Gebremichael, is seeking refuge there. It is understood that he has been in Juba for several weeks. When he arrived he

asked the President of South Sudan to mediate. The official also said that Debretsion did not meet with President el-Sisi of Egypt while in South Sudan and did not ask to meet him.

- Egypt has expressed full solidarity with Sudan after clashes on the Sudan - Ethiopian border, stating that “Khartoum has the right to defend its security and exercise sovereignty over its territories.”
- Chairperson of the Horn of Africa Civil Society Forum, Albaqir Mukhtar, appeals to Sudan Prime Minister Hamdok, chair of the IGAD, “to use all efforts and all diplomatic avenues to bring all parties of this conflict to the negotiating table as has been done in South Sudan and Somalia.”
- Ahead of the 20th December IGAD meeting the Horn of Africa Civil Society Forum urges Ethiopia PM Abiy Ahmed to accept IGAD as mediator in the regionalising conflict.
- Julia Cassell, the former Minister of Gender from Liberia, urges African leaders to create the conditions for peace on the ground. Cassell is joined by nearly 120 women from 20 countries across the African continent: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Benin, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, DR Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Cameroon, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa.
- In the US, Black Lives Matter stands in solidarity with “all disenfranchised and displaced people in the Horn of Africa who are affected by violent conflict in Ethiopia.”

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 18 December)

- More than half of the over 65,000 refugees that arrived in Sudan are children and many have been separated from family members.
- The ICRC has released statistics on medical and first aid assistance provided in Tigray. These include over 2000 wounded, of which 550 were critical.
- UNHCR and partners working in four Tigray refugee camps with nearly 100,000 refugees continue to experience “challenges to access the camps and sustain the operational capacity on the ground.”
- Refugees in the four camps in Tigray urge aid to be provided to the other two camps Shimelba and Hitsats and they warn that camps are not yet safe.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 18 December)

- UN mission in Afar finds that “thousands of newly internally displaced people need water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as medical supplies and care”.
- There continue to be reports of Eritrean soldiers looting in Tigray. Computers and other equipment was allegedly taken from a school operated by a Catholic mission.
- The United Nations has announced USD 36 million in emergency aid for civilians in Tigray. The majority will go to the purchase of medicine and food and civilian protection.
- Mekelle University announces a graduation ceremony. The online announcement is not matching the reality on the ground as many students have left and students and professors are still out of reach.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 18 December)

- Desert locusts threaten food security in Ethiopia and the wider region.

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Links of interest

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict-attack-idUSKBN28R1IE>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-as-killings-of-civilians-continue-in-metekel-authorities-in-benishagul-gumuz-amhara-regional-states-step-up-blames/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55236354>

<https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-ethiopia-4>

<https://www.sudanspost.com/ethiopias-debretsion-seeking-refuge-in-juba-official-confirms/>

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/397091/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-expresses-its-condolences-to-Sudan-over-vict.aspx>

https://www.abnewswire.com/pressreleases/african-women-appeal-for-a-horn-of-africa-peace-initiative_523311.html