

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 33 - 22 December

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Regional situation (as confirmed per 22 December)

- Mahad Salad, a Somali opposition lawmaker, is asking whether the Somali govt forces that were deployed yesterday in Dolow district at the Somalia-Kenya border, are Somali or Eritrean troops. It was reported that the arriving troops include troops trained by Eritrea months ago, sent from Asmara.
- An *unconfirmed* twitter post claimed that the Somali military fired rockets with the assumed aim to prevent a Kenyan military aircraft from carrying out an air strike.
- A delegation from South Africa, led by the National Organizer of the South Africa Communist Party-SACP Mhelekwa Nxumalo, organised in the Somaliland Action Group in Johannesburg, visited Somaliland. They were received by President Bihi. The group advocates for recognition of Somaliland.
- A strict lockdown is in place in Eritrea from 22-12. The use of private cars is not allowed but trucks are exempted. People are banned from moving between villages. No end date for the measures has been provided.
- A witness told the Guardian that "Eritreans were really leading the Ethiopian forces in the area". They played a major role in the ENDF 'law and order' operation in Tigray.
- Eritrean soldiers armed Eritrean refugees in Tigrayan camps, "before looting property, slaughtering livestock and burning crops" of local populations living near the camps.
- The Ethiopian PM, Abiy Ahmed, has said that the recent skirmishes along the border with Sudan will not break the historic ties that exist between both countries.

International dimension (as confirmed per 22 December)

- Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission commented on the tough challenges in Ethiopia: "It cannot be denied (..) that the crisis in Tigray regional state has provoked large-scale displacement" The AU encourages IGAD: "to support Ethiopia in addressing the humanitarian dimensions." Faki called for attention to refugees and displaced people.
- AU Commission Chair Faki emphasized that it "is necessary to recall the important role that Ethiopia plays in peacekeeping operations in the region, and I hope that these efforts will continue."
- On Saturday 19 Dec, Ethiopians and Germans demonstrated in Frankfurt for peace in Ethiopia without hatred and ethnic differences. Development aid from Germany to Ethiopia was, in 2019, €352.5m.
- The Ethiopian Federal Police Commission stated that it would work in partnership with Interpol to apprehend accomplices of the TPLF "for whom warrants were issued and reside abroad."

- Federal Police Crime Prevention Sector Head, Deputy Commissioner General Melaku Fanta has told the media in Mekelle that arrest warrants have been issued against anyone that is collaborating with the TPLF.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 22 December)

- William Carter (Norwegian Refugee Council) tweeted him singing a Christmas song from one of the new refugee camps in Sudan. He dedicated it to all the separated families.
https://twitter.com/WillCarter_NRC/status/1340973538770100225

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 22 December)

- According to a witness on the ground ENDF soldiers killed 'many' in Hagere Selam in Tigray. They are thought to have come to the town to take revenge after they lost a battle against Tigrayan forces.
- In subsequent days the town Hagere Selam was 'entirely' looted by Eritrean soldiers fighting on the side of the ENDF. They were going door to door, forcing their way in and taking what they could, especially electronics, TVs, audio installations and mobile phones.
- In Hagere Selam there is no water and no electricity. Little food is available and the hospital is in a dire situation as medical supplies are running critically low. It cannot refer patients to the main Ayder referral hospital in Mekelle.
- Witnesses from the ground state that the Ethiopian and Eritrean armies moved along the roads, from town to town. This is where the people are at a direct risk of being killed or looted. Witnesses from Tigray report that Eritrean soldiers are now in Abiy Addi and in Mekelle.
- According to an analyst the harvest in Tigray is worst hit (1) in South Tigray because of heavy damage by locusts; (2) in Western Tigray where Amhara and Eritrean soldiers are all over the place, and people fear harvesting crops; (3) in places along the roads.
- Suspended activities of humanitarian organisations in Tigray include sixteen humanitarian INGOs with 596 staff (international and national) and other national non-governmental organisations.
- Pictures on social media show 21 destroyed tanks, armoured cars, and BM-21 rocket launchers taken on the road from Maykeyih to Hewanii. According to the source, these vehicles were destroyed by the Tigray Defence Forces. The drivers reportedly returned from Mekoni to Mekelle due to fears of continuing fighting on the Southern front.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 22 December)

- The International Rescue Committee is warning that the war in Tigray is making the fight against the locust invasion more difficult and that millions of Ethiopians are in need of food assistance.
- The Oromo Liberation Front is urging the international community to ensure that the Ethiopian government releases political prisoners ahead of the elections planned in 2021.
- The Ethiopia Development Partners Group (DPG) Executive Committee members received a brief by the Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide, and Minister of Peace, Muferiat Kamil, on the measures to ensure "peace and the return to normalcy after the end of the law enforcement operation in Tigray".

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Links of interest

<https://twitter.com/BashirHashiysf/status/1340926633700515840?s=19>

<https://www.somalilandnews.com/south-african-based-somaliland-action-group-meets-president-commits-to-support-quest-for-recognition/>

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-12/21/c_139607588.htm

<https://addisstandard.com/news-olf-accuses-govt-of-fresh-crackdown-on-its-members-oromia-region-says-measures-taken-on-several-dozen-rebel-members-thousands-arrested-across-region/>

<https://amp.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/dec/21/slaughtered-like-chickens-eritrea-heavily-involved-in-tigray-conflict-say-eyewitnesses>