

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 36 - 25 December

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Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 25 December)

- Colonel Ayalew Beyene, chief of the Metekel Zone federal army Command Post, says 100 civilians were killed in the attacks in Benishangul-Gumuz. Colonel Ayalew further states the perpetrators were “bandits” from the Gumuz community who do not represent the whole community.
- Witnesses speak of attacks on civilians in Benishangul-Gumuz: Belay Wajera, a farmer in the western town of Bulen, counted 82 dead bodies in a field near his home after the raid at dawn on 23 Dec. Reuters reports he and his family awoke to the sound of gunshots and ran out of their home as men shouted “catch them”, he said. His wife and five of his children were shot dead, he was shot in the buttocks while four other children escaped and are now missing.”
- 7 officials have currently been detained for playing an alleged role in planning the attacks.
- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announces the launch of a government military task force in Benishangul-Gumuz. The Benishangul-Gumuz communication bureau announced the army has so far killed 42 members of the armed group and reports capturing weapons.
- Analysts warn the situation could escalate to an open conflict between the Benishangul-Gumuz and Amhara regional states.
- National Electoral Board of Ethiopia has announced its plan to conduct the postponed national election in late May or early June next year.
- Report that around 280 Priests of Tigray origin have been imprisoned in Addis Ababa.
- Deputy Head of Intergovernmental Bureau, Former Head of Government Communications Affairs Office, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia, sends the following personal tweet: “We have to defend ourselves. They don’t let us live. Let us not allow them to live. We are confronted with existential threat. As the former president said, the question is; shall we be vanished or shall they. The choice is clear. They have to vanish!”
- #StopWarOnTigre calls for suspension of the handle @AsemahagnAseres which is calling for genocide.
- Member of Horn of Africa Editorial Board, Faisal Roble, states “Ethiopia is no longer a federal state. PM Abiy violently & methodically removed the leaders of Somali, Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benshangul-Gumuz, and Tigray. Next step is a constitutional amendment to restore a unitary system. What follows next - peace or war - is anyone's guess.”
- PM Abiy publishes article on the ‘law and order operations’ in Tigray, stating he is “determined to ensure our next elections, scheduled to take place in mid-2021, are fair, free, and inclusive, and that the people of Tigray, like all other Ethiopians, shall soon be led by a regional government of their free own choice.”

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 25 December)

- Asimba Democratic Party (ADP) in the Tigray region, releases press release urging for 1. the immediate end of the ongoing war in Tigray state and to start the banking, medical, telephone, transport, electricity and water services in Tigray state immediately; 2. immediate humanitarian assistance; 3. the Eritrean army, which has been wreaking havoc in Tigray, to leave Tigray territory immediately; 4. the stop to massacring of civilians in the Tigray region and to investigate the ongoing human rights violations by an independent body; 5. to immediately end the ongoing human rights abuses against civilians, including those imprisoned simply for being Tigrinyan; 6. for the federal government to fulfil its responsibility to end the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Amhara people in Benishangul Gumuz.
- World Food Programme delivered food for 35,000 refugees in Adi Harush and Mai Ayni refugee camps, but the convoy to Hitsats and Shimelba camps was unable to deliver aid due to insecurity in the area.
- ACT Alliance launches an appeal for funds so that its members in Ethiopia, Ethiopia Orthodox Church Development Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Ethiopia Evangelical Mekane Yesus Church (EECMY-DASSC) and Lutheran World Federation (LWF), can respond to the crisis in Tigray.
- Facebook post of a situation with shooting and panic in Mekelle, probably from several weeks ago: <https://www.facebook.com/100034212801153/videos/pcb.408541016962988/408539763629780/>

Military situation (as confirmed per 25 December)

- Ethiopia PM Abiy Ahmed announced that forces will be deployed in Metekel zone, Benishangul Gumuz regional state after the massacre of yesterday in which more than hundred people were killed the day after the PM visited the same area.

International dimension (as confirmed per 25 December)

- Somaliland President Bihi receives a red carpet welcome during a visit to Djibouti on 23 Dec. Somaliland is seeking international recognition. It runs its own military, currency and central bank.
- There is no response at this moment from Somalia to the visit of Bihi to Djibouti. Previously Mogadishu cut diplomatic ties with Kenya and Guinea after they pulled out the red-carpet for President Bihi.
- The United States expresses deep concern “for the safety and security of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia”.
- The United States calls on “the Ethiopian government to uphold its obligations under international law and to take appropriate measures to ensure the protection and safety of all refugees in Ethiopia. Those responsible for egregious abuses or violations against civilians must be held accountable.”

Regional situation (as confirmed per 25 December)

- Opposition candidates in Somalia reject the election schedule set out by the Federal Electoral Implementation Team.

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Links of interest

<https://www.fanabc.com/english/pm-announces-deployment-of-necessary-forces-to-address-root-causes-of-problem-in-metekel-zone/>
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