

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 38 - 27 December 2020

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Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 27 December)

- The national election in Ethiopia will take place nationwide on the 5th of June 2021, as decided and announced by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).
- The Tigray Regional State is not included in the timetable. The election board announced that a date for elections in Tigray will be announced once the state of emergency in Tigray state is lifted.

Military and regional situation (as confirmed per 27 December)

- Sudan Minister of Information, Faisal Mohamed Saleh, stated that intelligence reports “indicate that the weapons used in the attacks” targeting territory in Sudan, belonged to the army.
- Sudan has reclaimed land that was occupied by Ethiopian farmers in the last 25 years, this land has now been brought under control of the Sudanese army.
- The Sudan army is mobilising defense capacity both at the Eritrean and Ethiopian border, with increasing fears of further clashes in the border areas.
- PM Abiy has denied any involvement of Addis Abeba in the border conflict with Sudan, emphasising the friendly relations between Sudan and Ethiopia. PM Abiy previously negotiated between different parties in Sudan resulting in the current government.
- The Ethiopian military is perceived to have a major say in the negotiation taking place regarding the Benishangul Gumuz Region, according to ALAIN Amharic news which reports that senior military officials have been in closed meetings with the senior officials in the zone.
- Some officials in the Benishangul Gumuz Region have been arrested (not reported by whom).
- Unconfirmed report on social media that a Major General, Commander of ENDF Eastern Division, has been killed in battle with Tigray Defense Forces in Tigray.
- Continued fighting and looting reported in social media. An elder of Adigrat Town, named Ato Debasom Abraha was reportedly killed today while defending his property from looting by Eritrean soldiers. He reportedly killed 14 Eritrean troops before he was shot.
- Reported that several civilians by Eritrean soldiers were “executed” in Adi Da’zero town, a town between Shire and Sheraro, near the Eritrean border. According to a second report, invading Eritrean forces executed a “total of 58 civilians in Adwa (31) and Adi Da’ero, (27)”. Calls for full access by the UN to investigate these killings.
- Unconfirmed report of increasing tension on the Kenya - Somalia border between Mandera and Bula Hawo as Somali troops and Kenyan backed Janan fighters are increasing the number of fighters at the border.

Regional situation (as confirmed per 27 December)

- Report of VICE suggests Amhara youth militia Fano was involved in the massacre in Mai Kadra, as Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) looked on as the massacre went on and ethnic profiling was carried out preventing civilians from fleeing.
- New witness report on the Mai Kadra massacre published by VICE, interviewing refugees who had reached Al Qadarif, Sudan: "He was working as a day labourer on a farm near the city of Mai Kadra when Ethiopian government-aligned ethnic militias known as Fano, from the neighbouring region of Amhara, descended. "Fano from the Amhara region came, then took us all out from our homes. We saw our neighbours killed and slaughtered, in the same way as you cut wood, with an axe and knife." Fano is a youth militia from Amharic region in Ethiopia, neighbouring Tigray.
- According to the report of VICE: "youths were sent to kill us. [A group of] more than 70 were trying to kill us. We hid ourselves in the fields. They hunted us. On the way many were killed. We passed many dead bodies." The witness states that only six made it to the border out of a group of eight: "They checked the IDs of people...if they find someone with Tigrayan origin...[they] slaughter with a knife."
- The report of Vice alleges that: "As chaos tore through the city, (..) Ethiopian federal forces stood by as Fano fighters went door to door, demanding to see IDs in order to identify ethnic Tigrayans."
- According to the report of Vice "Fano militants continued to terrorise civilians attempting to flee to Sudan." In earlier reports it was observed that ENDF troops blocked refugees from passing to Sudan.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 27 December)

- Reported from Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, that civil servants and university employees are not yet back in office and that they are in a state of uncertainty on their situation. Besides, government employees and civil servants have not received salaries since October.
- Banks in Mekelle are still closed.
- Dimsti Woyane (DW) Television from the TPLF-led administration in Tigray is back on air after having been taken off the air, when PFDJ lost control of Mekelle. It is not known where the TV channel is broadcasted from.
- The Alameda Textile Factory and other factories are reported to have been completely destroyed and looted by Eritrean troops.

International dimension (as confirmed per 27 December)

- The official account of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) #UNGeneva states that "if civilians were deliberately killed by a party or parties to the conflict, these killings would amount to war crimes." The office points out that independent investigation is needed that is impartial, thorough, transparent.

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