

## Situation Report EPPA HORN No. 41 - 30 December 2020

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### Military situation (as confirmed per 30 December)

- Fighting between ground troops of the Ethiopian aligned forces (ENDF) and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) since early morning today (29/12) on the road from Wukro to Mekelle, including Agula, Mai Mekden, and East of Wikro in Atsbi, as well as in the outskirts of Mekelle, in Messebo.
- Fighting between ENDF and TPLF ground troops South West from Mekelle around Samre.
- There was also fighting between ENDF and TPLF troops at Finariwa, near the Tigray Southern border with Amhara region on the way from Samre (Tigray) to Sekota (in Amhara region).
- Ongoing fighting between ENDF and TPLF along the winding road that climbs to Atsbi, starting from the outskirts of Wukro.
- Roads from Mekelle to Adwa and from Mekelle to Wukro were closed in the afternoon.
- Officially confirmed that around Shire, Tigray, an Airforce MiG-23 jet was downed by TPLF several weeks ago. The pilot Col Tango was buried in Bishoftu a few days ago.
- According to a local direct source, the town of Wukro has been targeted or attacked by 216 bombs.
- Local sources say that there was no killing in the church in Tashi. However local sources state that there were 'a lot of killings' in Hagere Selam and Halah and Ala'isa on the way from Mekele to Hagere Selam.
- The ENDF has reported that it has captured containers, vehicles of rockets and missiles of the TPLF.

### Reported regional situation

- Refugees interviewed in Hamdayet refugee camp (Sudan), declared that 250 people from a single village, Adi Aser, in Tigray were forcefully abducted to Eritrea by Eritrean soldiers in November. (AP)

### Situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 30 December)

- The World Food Programme delivered food to 35.000 Eritrean refugees in May Ayni and Adi Harush in Tigray, but not to Shemelba and Hitstats camps with tens of thousands of refugees without support.
- Safety missions have been sent by the UN to Shemelba and Hitsats camps.
- Not all banks were open in Mekelle. Only a few government owned branches in the center were opened. Only depositing is possible. There is no explanation why they are only open for deposits.
- Tigray Prosperity Party Mekelle Head office has commenced work today.
- Dashen Beer branch manager in Adigrat, Isayas Asgedom was murdered along with his entire family. He was in a church outside Edaga Hamus. His son (Alula) was detained in Addis.

- Artist Henok Aregawi was killed in Adigrat allegedly by Eritrean troops. One of his songs is titled "peace to my country Ethiopia".
- A courthouse in Humera had been turned into a 'slaughterhouse', allegedly by Amhara militia. (AP)
- The AP reports from Sudan refugee camps that Tigrayan refugees are now arriving from areas deeper in Tigray. These refugees suffer from trauma, some gunshot wounds, starvation and dehydration.
- An NPR reporter visited a refugee camp in Sudan with many survivors of the Mai Kadra incident. According to the testimonies, on November 9, "at about 3:00 a.m., men started rampaging through Mai-Kadra." The witness states: "She saw them when she opened the door to her house. (...) They were young men like the ones here at this camp. She says the militants threatened ethnic Tigrayans like her." The reporter finds that government related militia were explicitly alleged as perpetrators in addition to potential other perpetrators. 700 people are estimated to have been killed in the massacre.
- The NPR report points to intimidation of interviewees and finds that ethnic violence between Tigray and Amhara refugees is high. The UNHCR has separated both groups to calm the situation.
- AP reports that refugees find the area around the reception center in Sudan near the border with Ethiopia (Tigray) "unsafe": stating that Amhara militia fighters threaten the refugees.

#### Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 30 December)

- Two officials of the Benishangul Gumuz region were arrested in relation to a "security problem" of the Metekel Zone: Mr. Atinkut Shitu - Chief Administrator of Metekel zone and Inspector Misgana Enjifeta - Deputy police commissioner of Benishangul Gumuz region.
- Members of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Council have unanimously voted to revoke the immunity of four members. Those four members are: Adgo Amsaya, former vice president of Benishangul Gumuz regional state; Shiferaw Chelibo, former Director General of the region's Science and Technology Agency; Arega Balbid, former leadership of Metekel zone; and Girma Meni, member.
- Three of the officials were arrested in connection with the massacre in Bekuji Kebele, Bulen Woreda, Metekel zone in which more than 200 civilians were killed. The regional government said they were suspected of involvement and negligence to discharge their responsibility.

#### Reported International dimension (as confirmed per 30 December)

- The US top diplomat on African Affairs, Tibor Nagy, expressed extreme concern "by continuing reports of intimidation of journalists in Ethiopia. U.S. resolve to see media freedom respected remains unshaken." These comments come following the arrest of a Reuters cameraman.
- The EU calls for investigation into 'ethnically targeted' violence in Ethiopia.
- Foreign nationals describe the many difficulties they encountered in leaving Tigray and Ethiopia. To reach Addis Ababa, they were bused out through Afar. They were profiled as being originally from Tigray. One was almost taken off the plane bound for London.
- The WHO chief Dr. Tedros Adhanom, expressed his concern about the situation in Tigray. Like him, many other people around the world have difficulties contacting relatives or friends in Tigray.
- Two Ethiopian officials from the Derg regime, which preceded the Federal Ethiopian regime, have had their sentence commuted. They have been hiding inside the Italian Embassy in Addis Ababa since 1991. Italian authorities did not kick them out, citing the possibility for the death penalty.
- The Sudanese PM, Hamdok, has met with the local governor to discuss the refugee situation.

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#### **Links of interest**

<https://apnews.com/article/eritrea-sudan-middle-east-ethiopia-only-on-ap-a4cba907c516401df0a0b3c7eb095405>  
<https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/2020-12-28/hundreds-of-civilians-killed-with-machetes-and-axes-in-ethiopian-town>

<https://eritreahub.org/last-flight-from-tigray-two-young-womens-escape-from-the-war>