

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 42 - 31 December 2020

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Military situation

- The TPFL broadcaster Dimtsi Woyanen (DW) reports victories by the TPLF including over the ENDF 4th brigade moving from Adwa through Edaga Arbi. The TPLF claims it ambushed them in Zongi, and 124 soldiers were killed, and 114 captured, as well as weapons, ammunition, vehicles and a 507 rocket.
- The TPLF also claims that it has captured ENDF colonel Alemu Semie, commander of the 4th brigade.
- Eritrean troops were blocked on the way from Ahsea around Ziban Guila, carrying large amounts of looted property. They took many casualties and were forced to turn back.
- According to DW the ENDF aligned forces are committing atrocities on civilians in Gijet, southern Tigray through heavy bombardment and killed 21 youth, including a 7 year old child.
- The economist has published an article which argues that there is mounting evidence of an Eritrean presence in Ethiopia. This “makes it harder to bring peace to Tigray”.
- Eight hundred ENDF and Eritrean troops have gathered at the Trans Ethiopia PLC camp in Mekelle. They reportedly retreated from Agula and May Mekden. Their commander is severely wounded.
- Eritrean soldiers in Tigray have reportedly only passed through, and have not occupied any positions.
- Pictures show that medical equipment and pharmacies of health centers in Wukro, Negash, Idagahamus and Adigrat towns were completely destroyed and looted - allegedly by Eritrean troops.
- Tsedale Lemma (Addis Standard) states that: “No armed conflict in the world, much less politically complex as the one in Tigray, has ever been resolved without a roundtable negotiated settlement.”

Reported Regional situation

- The Ethiopia crisis has a direct impact on South Sudan since Ethiopia is the major contributor of UNMISS and UNISFA-Abyei. Ethiopia is the head of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMM) and has a reasonable contribution of forces under CTSAMM. The crisis in Ethiopia is affecting its ability to engage with South Sudan.
- Refugees report they were hunted down by militia trying to escape to Sudan fleeing without anything.

Reported International dimension

- A Dutch humanitarian organization ZOA staff member is killed in Tigray, Ethiopia. The 52 year old staff member was murdered during the recent conflict while on duty in Hitsats refugee camp.
- United Nations Human Rights Chief, Bachelet, demands access to the whole of Tigray.
- Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summons the Ethiopian chargé d'affaires to Cairo to clarify statements by the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson on Egypt's internal affairs.

- An AU initiated negotiation on the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is scheduled for Sunday. Agreement was almost reached in 2020, but fell through. The outcome of the negotiations will be influenced by the dispute on land-ownership at the Ethiopia-Sudan border, fueling conflict.
- The UN has reiterated its Human Rights chief's demands for access to the whole of Tigray.
- Article in Foreign Affairs points out that PM Abiy is facing a legitimacy issue with ethnic tensions rising all over Ethiopia, causing a precarious situation. The article finds the conflict in Tigray is not over.
- US Council on Foreign Relations writes that misinformation and suppression of free speech erodes the credibility of PM Abiy.

Situation in Tigray

- Sources state that the church in Yeha, an archeological site, was looted, allegedly by Eritrean troops.
- Sources state that the school in Yeha, where many were taking shelter, was bombed. No information on casualties. Eritrean troops reportedly moved from Adwa through Yeha without occupying it.
- Sources state that there were killings in the *village* of Tashi (27-29/12). Federal soldiers started killing young men in the settlement area after they did not receive information about the whereabouts of TPLF leadership and militias. Tashi is located near Samre, where fighting has been taking place.
- Money transfers via Western Union and Moneygram are possible in Mekelle since 29/12. It is not clear whether people can access their regular accounts.
- Internet and mobile services remain cut in most of Tigray. While services have been partially returned to Mekelle, large areas of Tigray remain cut off.
- VICE reported on interviews with refugees in Sudan stating that civilians were not warned, prepared and protected. Civilian houses and people in their homes were shelled during the bombardment.
- In another interview, a refugee from Tigray in Sudan reported seeing people killed and "slaughtered", he saw many dead bodies on the way and stated that many died on the way.
- VICE also reported that militias are blocking refugees from Tigray to reach Sudan. Refugees are now crossing Sudan through the Eritrean border with Sudan and also through Ethiopian farmlands.

Situation in Ethiopia

- Over 20 Eritrean refugees fleeing from tigray, were arrested by federal police in Addis Ababa (30/12).
- The Ethiopian Red Cross reported that 207 people were killed in the attack at around 04:00 local time (23/12) in the village of Bekoji in Bulen county in the Metekel zone (Benishangul-Gumuz region).
- ENDF chief now in charge of Benishangul-Gumuz, says 50 perpetrators of the massacre are captured.
- 97.000 people have been displaced as a result of ethnic violence in Benishangul-Gumuz.

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Links of interest

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2020/12/30/evidence-mounts-that-eritrean-forces-are-in-ethiopia>
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1ukq3h-fUshA0a0ZDcSI22WHbfC6PnKtX&shorturl=1&ll=26.16920359729128%2C-14.51459589999999&z=2>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_wWwfTso7I&feature=youtu.be
<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2020/12/29/the-murky-politics-behind-the-metekel-massacres/>
<https://twitter.com/UNGeneva/status/1344323612694568961?s=08>
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2020-12-30/abiy-ahmeds-crisis-legitimacy>
<https://www.cfr.org/blog/amid-misinformation-and-suppressed-free-speech-ethiopian-conflict-erodes-abiy-credibility>
<https://youtu.be/9bAOHqV8bWU>