

Situation Report EPPA HORN No. 54 - 13 January 2021

[Europe External Programme with Africa](#) is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peace building, refugee protection and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EPPA has published extensively on issues related to movement and/or human trafficking of refugees in the Horn of Africa and on the Central Mediterranean Route. It cooperates with a wide network of Universities, research organisations, civil society and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and across Africa. Key in-depth publications [can be accessed on the website](#).

Reported war situation (as confirmed per 12 January)

- Tigray regional forces have taken Adi Berak and Daero Tekli areas from ENDF and from Eritrean forces. These are strategic locations that connect Adwa with Eritrea via Rama, a town on the border.
- Report of heavy war initiated by the Tigray regional forces on the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces at Semema and Adi-Etay. Semema is about 35 km South of Aksum.
- Footage emerged showing many vehicles of ENDF and Eritrean forces were destroyed by Tigray forces near Wukro in Tigray, following an attack by Tigray forces on an ENDF convoy a week ago.
- Radio Erena is reporting the deployment of additional Eritrean troops to Tigray in Shire, Adwa, Adigrat. Such troops are instructed to remain in the area until the situation in Tigray 'settles down'.
- Eritreans have been called up to report for military duty.
- It is reported that Eritrean wounded military troops are not being able to return home.
- Footage is emerging of Eritrean military involved in training of troops in the ENDF-alliance in Tigray.
- Some leaders and members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional government of Tigray, captured by ENDF and Eritrean troops, would have passed through Eritrea. The captives would have been taken to Eritrea before being handed to Ethiopia.
- It is specifically reported that the location of a picture showing Sebhat Nega, the co-founder of the TPLF, captured by soldiers, is recognised as Mai Edaga location. This is a place in Eritrea, approximately 48 km South of Asmara near the town of Dekemhare. This would point to a modus operandi in which captured TPLF members are abducted/taken to Eritrea and held there (for some time).
- Reported in Mekelle that people who are arrested can not be handed over as basic institutional structures have been destroyed.
- It was revealed by ETV that women were raped in Mekelle in the week following the takeover by the ENDF at the beginning of December; this was reported by an unidentified man in an Ethiopian military uniform who spoke of repeated abuses against women.
- Policemen in Mekelle say that they are not paid by the interim government appointed by Addis Ababa.
- Lists of 49 names of civilians who died in the Saint Mary's Church of Dengelat, Tigray, is circulating.
- Tension is building on the Ethiopia - Sudan border in the Fashqa triangle area. Ethiopia went 5 km into Sudanese claimed territory and five female civilians and a child have been killed by Ethiopian troops; two women are missing, as reported by Sudan. Sudanese troops are building up in the disputed areas.
- The Foreign Ministry of Sudan condemns "in strongest terms Ethiopia's militias aggression" in the Eastern Sudan Al-Fashqa triangle. Ethiopia has accused Sudan of expanding in its territories.
- Sudan called on the international community to condemn the aggression of the Ethiopian militias.

- The Ministry of Information of Sudan reports that there is no progress on the work of the Ethiopia - Sudan Border Commission.
- Ethiopia may take the issue of the GERD-dam to the UN Security Council, if negotiations are stalled.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 12 January)

- MSF teams have been able to enter Tigray, and reports that “tens of thousands of displaced people are living in abandoned buildings and on construction sites in western areas around Shire, Dansha, and Humera towns, while others found refuge in host communities in the east and south of the region.”
- MSF states that “people have very limited access to food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare.”
- MSF teams report “many people are still hiding in the mountains and in rural areas across the region.”
- According to the MSF teams the situation is dire: “power lines are cut, water supplies are not functional, telecommunications networks are down, banks are closed, and many people are afraid to return to their places of origin because of the ongoing insecurity.”
- Food is in very short supply as the war broke out during harvest time and farmers were already coping with the locust infestation.
- Many civilians in Tigray are not yet reached by any food supplies and families face additional burdens as relatives are moving in with them due to the massive displacements in the Tigray region.
- Between three and four million people have no access to basic health care in the Central Tigray alone, the MSF Teams estimate.
- Most of the internally displaced people in Mai Kadra and Humera have left, MSF reports.
- More than 60 civilians were killed in attacks in the Metekel zone in Benishangul Gumuz regional state.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 12 January)

- Eritrean refugees in Addis Ababa are abducted to Eritrea by Eritrean troops in Ethiopia’s capital.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 12 January)

- Concern raised that Ethiopia and the Horn become increasingly part of the security landscape of the Middle East and that this is a geostrategic concern.
- Expert states that the characterisation of the Tigray crisis as a “domestic law enforcement operation” is undermined by the involvement of Eritrean forces, foreign drone attacks, use of airstrikes, mechanized ground units, and ethnic militias.
- Egyptian investors in Ethiopia will seek international arbitration to protect their investments in the Tigray region and a case will be filed if no agreement will be reached. The compensation on Egyptian investments due to the war in Tigray is estimated at 2 million US\$.

Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eepe.be any additional information and corrections.

Links of interest

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict/ethiopian-women-raped-in-mekelle-says-soldier-idUSKBN29E0IH>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-msf-provides-medical-assistance-some-most-affected-people-tigray?s=09>

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2021/01/12/egypt-investors-in-ethiopia-request-compensations-for-losses-due-to-tigray-conflict/>

https://www.aneews.com.tr/world/2021/01/12/ethiopia-accuses-sudan-of-breaching-border?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=facebook

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-ethiopia/ethiopia-warns-sudan-it-is-running-out-of-patience-over-border-dispute-idUSKBN29H228>