

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 59 - 18 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. EEPA 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.

### Reported war situation (as confirmed per 17 January)

- According to Sudan Tribune, the head of the Sudanese Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, disclosed that Sudanese troops were deployed on the border as per an agreement with the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, arranged prior to the beginning of the war.
- Al-Burhan told a gathering about the arrangements that were made in the planning of the military actions: "I visited Ethiopia shortly before the events, and we agreed with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia that the Sudanese armed forces would close the Sudanese borders to prevent border infiltration to and from Sudan by an armed party."
- Al-Burhan stated: "Actually, this is what the (Sudanese) armed forces have done to secure the international borders and have stopped there." His statement suggests that Abiy Ahmed spoke with him about the military plans before launching the military operation in Tigray.
- Ethiopia has called the operation a "domestic law and order" action to respond to domestic provocations, but the planning with neighbours in the region on the actions paint a different picture.
- Al-Burhan described as "inaccurate" statements by Ethiopian officials saying that Sudanese military are implementing the agenda of a third party. "Statements by Ethiopian officials claiming several border areas are a new development that requires to defend the integrity of the Sudanese territory."
- Reported in the Somali Guardian that dozens of Somali soldiers were used as cannon fodder in the recent offensive in Ethiopia's Tigray region and were killed in the conflict. The Somali soldiers were deployed after completing training in Eritrea a few months ago. The Somali government has previously denied involvement in the Tigray war.
- Report received that Amb. Seyoum Mesfin, Asmelash Weldeselassie and Abay Tsehaye were taken from their houses during the war and then brought to Senafe in Eritrea and mistreated there. They have recently been handed to the Ethiopian federal military and were executed without any charge.
- Eritrea is handing out Eritrean national ID-cards to Tigrayans living up to 8kms North of Adigrat. Eritrea is claiming 36 km into Tigray towards Adigrat belongs to Eritrea.
- Reported that 90% of the Central Zone of Tigray now controlled by Tigray regional forces and fighting was also reported in the Southern, Eastern, Western and Southern fronts.
- Tigray regional forces have captured 30 soldiers from EDF in Wajirat in Southern Tigray.
- Fighting was reported at Edaga Arbi and Tigray regional forces have destroyed one ENDF battalion and captured 8 Bren machine guns, 100 AK-47 and many soldiers. In revenge, ENDF forces killed more than 80 youths at Debre Abbay.
- An ENDF allied convoy was reportedly ambushed by Tigray defence forces at Enda Maryam near Hageresalam town in Central Zone Tigray.
- Fires were detected within Enticho town in Central Tigray, a location within an active area of conflict.

- Reported that more than 750 Tigrayan ethnic members of the federal police, who were disarmed during the Tigray war have been deployed and arrived in the Southern Tigray without arms after a short training with the purpose of restoring law and order.
- More Eritrean troops are coming to Adigrat telling citizens to stay closed at home.
- The Sudan defense minister said Ethiopia is massing military forces on the borders in locations facing the Sudanese army deployment.
- Sudan calls on Ethiopia to withdraw its forces from all positions under its control.
- The Washington Post writes that “Though Ethiopia’s prime minister declared victory in late November, its military and allied fighters remain active amid the presence of troops from neighboring Eritrea.”

#### Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 17 January)

- A report by The Washington Post states that starvation haunts Ethiopia’s Tigray region.
- The Washington Post writes that the “first humanitarian workers to arrive after pleading with the Ethiopian government for access describe weakened children dying from diarrhea after drinking from rivers.” The Post reports that “A local official told a Jan. 1 crisis meeting of government and aid workers that hungry people had asked for ‘a single biscuit.’”
- The Washington Post reported that a doctor in Sudan where refugees arrive stated that newer arrivals show signs of starvation. It is also reported that new arrivals come as far as from Aksum and Mekelle to Sudan.
- The Washington Post reports that “More than 4.5 million people, nearly the region’s entire population, need emergency food.” It reports a meeting in which “a Tigray administrator warned that without aid, ‘hundreds of thousands might starve to death’”.
- The Washington Post reports that “In the towns of Adigrat, Adwa and Axum, ‘the level of civilian casualties is extremely high in the places we have been able to access’”
- According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network “parts of central and eastern Tigray are likely in Emergency Phase 4, a step below famine.” states the Washington Post.
- The AP reports the head of the emergency unit of Doctors without Borders, Mari Carmen Vinales, stating that “There is an extreme urgent need — I don’t know what more words in English to use — to rapidly scale up the humanitarian response because the population is dying every day as we speak.”
- The Telegraph reported that churches and mosques in Tigray are attacked, vandalized and their sacred treasures looted. Further, International experts warned of historical vandalism and “cultural cleansing”.

#### Reported International situation (as confirmed per 17 January)

- The International Tigrayan Muslims Association expressed outrage over the attack on the Al-Nejashi Mosque.

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@eepea.be](mailto:info@eepea.be) any additional information and corrections.

#### **Links of interest**

<https://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article70344>

<https://somaliguadian.com/exclusive-hundreds-of-somali-troops-used-as-cannon-fodder-in-ethiopia-tigray-war/>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/extreme-urgent-need-starvation-haunts-ethiopia-tigray/2021/01/17/3d219faa-589e-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/extreme-urgent-need-starvation-haunts-ethiopia-tigray/2021/01/17/3d219faa-589e-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb_story.html)

[https://secure.telegraph.co.uk/customer/secure/register/?ICID=int\\_overlay\\_AEM\\_hard\\_regcta\\_anon&redirectTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2F2021%2F01%2F17%2Fchurches-mosques-tigray-vandalised-looted-ethiopian-purge%2F](https://secure.telegraph.co.uk/customer/secure/register/?ICID=int_overlay_AEM_hard_regcta_anon&redirectTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraph.co.uk%2Fnews%2F2021%2F01%2F17%2Fchurches-mosques-tigray-vandalised-looted-ethiopian-purge%2F)

<https://twitter.com/TsedaleLemma/status/1350451436820328451?s=20>