

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 63 - 22 January 2021

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Reported war situation (as confirmed per 21 January)

- The Economist states that “Ethiopia’s government appears to be wielding hunger as a weapon” as the Tigray region is “being starved into submission”, citing reports of “horrifying accounts of ethnic killings, mass rapes—and starvation.”
- This is a human made tragedy, with purposeful ‘red tape’ created by the Ethiopian Ministry of Peace, according to the UN, stating that “Plenty of food is available. Charities and UN agencies have been trying to get supplies through for months. But Ethiopia’s Orwellian Ministry of Peace has sent them on a paperchase for permits.”
- UN Humanitarian Chief, Mark Lowcock, states: “For more than two months there has been essentially no access to Tigray. (...) There are 450 tonnes of supplies we’ve been trying to get in that are stuck.”
- Lowcock states that when the federal government is on rare occasions granting permission “for an aid lorry to pass” it is obstructed on the way: “it is typically stopped en route by regional governments, which insist that they, too, need to give permission, or halted by troops inside Tigray.”
- The Economist calls for donors to tie any support to full humanitarian access: “Others, such as America and Britain, should add financial pressure. Ethiopia is desperately short of foreign currency, and depends on loans and grants from the IMF and World Bank. Until its government allows food into Tigray, donors should not give it another dollar.” In other words: no aid until civilians are allowed to eat.
- United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Pramilla Patten said, “I am greatly concerned by serious allegations of sexual violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, including a high number of alleged rapes in the capital, Mekelle”.
- Pramilla Patten states that: “There are also disturbing reports of individuals allegedly forced to rape members of their own family, under threats of imminent violence. Some women have also reportedly been forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, while medical centres have indicated an increase in the demand for emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections. In addition, there are increasing reports of sexual violence against women and girls in a number of refugee camps.”
- Pramilla Patten calls on all parties involved in the hostilities in the Tigray region “to commit to a zero-tolerance policy for crimes of sexual violence, in line with their respective obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.”
- It is reported that two Generals of Tigray, Major General Mohammed Esha and Brigadier General Mulugeta Berhe, regional forces have surrendered to the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).
- An Ethiopian spokesperson reports that the two generals were members of the TPLF Central command and coordinated actions against the northern ENDF command post in Nov 2020. However, this is denied by a source who states that: “This is exaggeration. The major commanders are not these.”

adding that the generals had retired “a long time ago” and were “not involved in leading operations” as they had “serious health problems.”

- Confirmation that journalist Dawit Kebede Araya was killed by Ethiopian government Security Forces. The journalist was working at Tigray TV. He was killed together with the lawyer Bereket Berhe in the area Adi Hawsa: “Both were shot in their head and their bodies were found in a car they were driving.” at 8 pm EAT (19/1).
- Correction: A witness states that Eritrean troops killed *Tigray* soldiers, priests, farmers, and burned crops. The Eritrean troops forced farmers and priests to slaughter their own animals and they killed the farmers if they refused to do so.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 21 January)

- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) has reported that Aksum University graduating students will be enrolled at Mekelle University, Kwiha Campus to complete their studies.
- Previous reports indicate that Aksum University was destroyed and looted by Eritrean and Ethiopian forces. There is a report of a male lecturer killed under cruel circumstances in a report by a witness, stating the killing was carried out by Eritrean soldiers. A witness who screamed was also killed in a sadistic act of violence, according to a witness report.
- Water supply in Tigray has been affected as the Gereb Geba clean water dam has stopped operating and workers have left work because of the conflict. The situation is aggravated by the looting of all the offices, money taken from safes, and vehicles, drilling machines and generators taken away.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 21 January)

- Mr. Dina Mufti, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, denies allegations that Eritrean and Somali soldiers are among forces fighting in Tigray, speaking to the media today (20/11). The statement came after the head of the Sovereign Council in Sudan, Al-Burhan, stated that Ethiopia and Sudan had discussed tactical issues prior to the war began in Tigray. Other reports also indicated that tactical preparations were made with Eritrea and with Somalia prior to the beginning of hostilities.
- Mr Dina Mufti rejected an offer by South Sudan to mediate between Ethiopia and Sudan.
- Concern that the conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray region may negatively affect foreign investors in the Ethiopian garment industry, an upcoming market.
- Several settlements in Benishangul Gumuz’s Metekel zone have caught on fire since January 1, 2021, with a high likelihood of these being attacks, as part of the ongoing conflict in this part of Ethiopia.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 21 January)

- UK Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, is visiting East Africa to urge Prime Minister Abiy to express the need for unrestricted humanitarian access to provide assistance to the Tigray region.
- Raab, during a visit to Sudan, has also said that the British government would back Sudanese economic reform with 50 million US dollars. Some of the aid would be direct handouts to Sudanese families.

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Links of interest

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/01/23/ethiopia-government-appears-to-be-wielding-hunger-as-a-weapon>

<https://www.facebook.com/117939301585215/posts/3687878997924543/?sfnsn=mo>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-conflict-journalist-idUSKBN29Q21>

<https://qz.com/africa/1960367/ethiopia-garment-manufacturing-hopes-unravel-with-tigray-war/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-int/dam-down-water-supplies-failing-in-ethiopia-conflict-hit-tigray-idUSKBN29POXH>

<https://www.ft.com/content/e60e1abb-0d7e-46b0-b774-52132a9fec51>

<https://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article70364>