

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 69 - 28 January 2021

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Reported war situation (as confirmed per 27 January)

- Arbi Harnet (a group of underground sources in Eritrea) warns that preparations are being made and already “near completion” for a “renewed final offensive” in Tigray.
- The offensive is being finalised and implementers are being informed that this will be “the final offensive to annihilate TPLF”, orchestrated as what is called a “final offensive”, the group states.
- Report that large numbers of Ethiopian uniforms arrived in Mekelle yesterday and that Eritrean soldiers were changing uniforms during the telecom shut-down. More Eritrean soldiers arrived in Mekelle.
- There is concern that Eritrean soldiers may be instructed to fight in Ethiopian uniforms in some places. Eritrean troops were dressed in ENDF uniforms in the Hawzen and Nebelet battles and they were captured by Tigray regional forces wearing these uniforms.
- At the airport in Mekelle, Eritrean troops, carrying out the security, are dressed in ENDF uniforms.
- The news comes as other sources report that Brigadier General Abraha Kassa, Director of National Security of Eritrea, was in Addis Ababa on 25/1. There was a disagreement among Eritrean and Ethiopian higher officials during the meeting at the 4 Killo Palace, the office and residence of the PM. Various sources reported altercations, with some reporting gunshots and a report of people having been shot, possibly even killed; the exact number of casualties is unknown due to variance in reports.
- Information from the Eritrean Embassy in Addis Ababa was leaked, according to a source, instructing a strategy to ensure a policy against “all educated and elite Tigreans” to be ‘forced to flee’ or ‘be squashed’ ‘mercilessly’ (as reported yesterday).
- This strategy builds on the Eritrean government’s interest in the list of arrest warrants of Tigray leadership. Eritrean official government news-site Tesfanews published a list of arrest warrants that - according to the news site, had been issued by the Ethiopian federal policy Commission. The list was published on Nov 13 and includes the names of 64 persons. The same list was published by Fana.
- The following persons named in this list of arrest warrants have now been killed: Asmelash Weldesilassie (TPLF executive member); Daniel Assefa (Head of Tigray Bureau of Finance and Planning) and ; Seyoum Mesfin (former Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia); Abay Tsehaye (former Director of Policy Study and Research Center Institute); Zeray Asgedom (former Director General of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority) ; and Sekoture Getachaw (former official).
- The following persons named in this list have been arrested: Dr Abraham Tekeste (Vice president of Tigray Regional State); Keria Ibrahim (former Speaker of House of Federation of Ethiopia); Dr Engineer Solomon Kidane (former Head of Addis Ababa City Road and Transport Bureau); Dr Addisalem Balema (Director General of Policy Research Institute); Mulu Gebregziabher (former state Minister of Transport); and TPLF co-founder, Sebat Nega.
- Bank accounts of the persons on the arrest warrant list have been frozen.

- The Eritrean underground group Arbi Harnet states that “Eritrean soldiers have been trying to escape the war to seek refuge in Sudan or in different directions once they reached Tigray”.
- According to the group many Eritrean soldiers and particularly women soldiers from the 17th and 61 brigades are now stationed in Humera” to stop Eritrean soldiers from fleeing to Sudan.
- The intervention of Eritrean and ENDF allied forces lacks a military command structure, other than the high-level personal relationships between PM Abiy and President Esayas. The military culture between the armed forces is different. While the ENDF is trained as a professional outfit, Eritrean Defence Force (EDF) is based on a conscript army, trained to survive on the land that has been captured, rather than rely on supplies and support.
- An ENDF colonel was killed by Tigray regional forces on 25/1 in Adwa.
- Six vehicles carrying soldiers were destroyed by Tigray regional forces in the Hamedo area, along the way from Adwa to Rama. The vehicles were allegedly going to Eritrea carrying looted properties.
- A new list is available of the victims of the attack on the Medhanie Alem church in Gu’etelo in wereda Gulomakeda (reported earlier). The list was compiled by local inhabitants and published in social media. On the celebration day of Medhanie Alem Eritrean soldiers killed 32 persons, among whom one could not be identified, and nine priests and church servants, one child and other villagers, mostly in Gu’etelo and some in nearby villages Ara’ero, Fredashim, Agamyu and Sebeya.
- More than 20 civilians have been killed by Eritrean troops in the Edaga Arbi area, Central zone, Tigray.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 27 January)

- The United States has made clear its position that all Eritrean troops need to leave Tigray immediately citing "Credible reports" had emerged of their involvement in human rights abuses, assaults in refugee camp, sexual violence and looting. The statement says there is “evidence of Eritrean soldiers forcibly returning Eritrean refugees from Tigray to Eritrea.”
- According to the statement “Eritrea appeared to have launched artillery attacks from its side of the border, and had troops in Tigray, though the exact number was unclear.”
- The State department states dialogue between the Ethiopian government and Tigrayans was "essential", and humanitarian aid needed to be mobilised immediately because of "credible reports" that hundreds of thousands of people may starve to death.
- The Biden administration has imposed a temporary freeze on U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as it reviews billions of dollars in weapons transactions approved by former President Donald Trump, according to U.S. officials.
- Mr. Biden “has made clear that we will end our support for the military campaign led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and I think we will work on that in very short order,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at his confirmation hearing last week. Washington will continue to help defend the Saudis against Houthi attacks, Mr. Blinken said.
- The review, the officials said, includes the sale of precision-guided munitions to Riyadh as well as top-line F-35 fighters to Abu Dhabi, a deal that Washington approved as part of the Abraham Accords, in which the United Arab Emirates established diplomatic relations with Israel.

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Links of interest

<https://eritreahub.org/breaking-warning-from-the-eritrean-underground-a-new-tigray-offensive-is-being-finalised>
<https://tesfanews.net/ethiopia-arrest-warrant-issued-against-tplf-members/>
https://www.fanabc.com/english/arrest-warrant-issued-for-tplf-junta-members/#google_vignette
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