

## Situation Report EPPA HORN No. 74 - 02 February 2021

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### Reported war situation (as confirmed per 01 February)

- Heavy fighting between Tigray Regional Forces and Ethiopian/Eritrean forces in areas between Semema and Edaga Berhe. It is reported that the Tigray Regional Forces have burned nine armoured vehicles. The information comes from commanders of Tigray Forces stationed in this battlefield.
- Another active fighting at the moment is at Wukro Maray, 15 kms West of Aksum. The other side at this front is dominated by Eritrean Forces. Tigray Regional Forces is selectively fighting the huge new force of combined Ethiopian and Eritrean forces that entered in the second campaign.
- Reported ambush on ENDF allied forces convoy at Wukro Maray town, near Shire, by Tigray regional forces. Meanwhile heavy fighting is reported for the third consecutive day in the Kola Tembien area.
- Reported that a Tigrayan businessman named Yibrah Teame was allegedly murdered in the Bademe area by Eritrean troops (TMH).
- Reported in direct communication with the political and military TPLF leadership that there are regular contacts with Dr. Debretsion, who is leading political mobilization and military operations.
- Sadistic perpetration of sexual violence reported. Report received that a girl from Abyi Adi was shot 4 times on her hands by a soldier who first went into their home asking where 'woyane' (a term for people in Tigray) is. Her father, a blind man, responded they didn't know and he was ordered to rape his own child. He was taken into another room and beaten by another soldier after he strongly refused. The girl was then ordered 'lawtash'. (This is an offensive term widely used referring to sexual intercourse in the context of violence or rape). When she refused, he fired a shot wounding her left hand small finger and then followed it with three shots on her right arm leaving her now amputated.
- Reported that a girl from Abyi Adi was presented to the emergency room at Ayder Hospital after being raped and then shot on her thighs multiple times by ENDF soldiers.
- Report received on another girl from Abyi Adi who was raped by an ENDF soldier. He asked her to go and buy him cigarettes. As she went, he followed her and told her to have sex with him using the term 'lawtash'. When she refused, he hit her leaving her behind unconsciously. It is reported that "she was lucky enough to be brought to Ayder and provided with care, unlike many other girls."
- Photos received with houses completely destroyed by heavy artillery in Mekelle.
- An overview of health facilities paints a dire picture. In general, health facility services including maternity and emergency services were shut down across the Tigray region. The life saving essential services including those who had follow up cases are deprived, for example in Hawzen, Fatsi, H/Selam primary hospitals, Abyi Adi, Adwa and Wukro hospitals and other sites. As a result of this both home and facility deaths are alarmingly increasing.
- Almost all health facilities found in Central, Eastern, North West and Western zones of Tigray are still not functional. Medical equipment and medications were stolen; doors and windows broken.
- Photos received of ambulances destroyed in the war in Tigray. Pictures show that Wukro Maray primary hospital and Selekleka hospital has been heavily looted and destroyed, reportedly by ENDF allied forces and Eritrean troops.

- Original audio recording received of the meeting held at Mekelle University between staff and the interim Tigray government head, Dr. Mulu Nega. He said the Ethiopian government does not have the capacity to get the Eritrean soldiers out of Tigray. In this meeting many questions were raised on the levels of damage that the war has brought to the people of Tigray and its institutions.
- The General Attorney of Ethiopia stated today that the number of people killed in Mai Kadra is exaggerated. The conclusion came after studying the situation on the ground for a month.
- The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) calls for an independent investigation into the Mai Kadra massacre.

#### Reported Regional situation (as confirmed per 01 February)

- Reported on Saturday that Ethiopian militia entered 7 km into Sudan and kidnapped three merchants, subsequently, the Sudanese army sent additional military reinforcements to the area. Sudanese protesters closed the Gallabat land border crossing with Ethiopia after the three merchants were kidnapped, demanding their immediate release. (Asharq Al-Awasat)

#### Reported International situation (as confirmed per 01 February)

- Tsedale Lemma, Editor in chief of Addis Standard, spoke with the U.S. Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and laid out key priorities for the US Foreign Policy in its engagement with Ethiopia and the ongoing armed conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia's upcoming elections and instability.
- Tsedale Lemma recommended the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray; immediate and binding cessation of hostilities by all parties involved in the conflict; immediate distribution of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable and a UN mandated, politically insulated independent investigation into the atrocities committed in Tigray.
- The Finnish minister of Foreign Affairs, Pekka Haavisto, is going to Ethiopia and countries in the region on an EU fact finding mission. The EU is concerned about the situation and the rising tensions.
- Haavisto states that "Nearly three months after the start of the conflict ... the security situation in Tigray remains dire, with reports of localised fighting especially in rural areas."
- Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), states that "twelve weeks since the start of conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region, meaningful humanitarian operations have still not begun. Aid organisations are unable to reach the Central and Western parts of the region, and two refugee camps are completely inaccessible."
- NRC states that "In the few instances where agencies are accessing the region, it is limited to areas along major roads or the capital Mekelle. Aid workers face an unpredictable approval process with blurred lines of authorizations, as well as unclear and shifting approval procedures."
- Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the NRC states that "In all my years as an aid worker, I have rarely seen a humanitarian response so impeded and unable to deliver in response for so long, to so many with such pressing needs. As an international community, we are clearly failing to deliver against the humanitarian imperative we are facing."
- "Ethiopia's military and government stands accused of purposeful ethnic cleansing, a precursor to all-out genocide," writes World Peace Foundation Pres Emeritus Robert Rotberg on the war in Tigray.
- Ethiopia issues a press release on its strategy concerning debt repayments and rescheduling. The Financial Times (FT) reports that Ethiopia has asked donor countries for debt relief as Covid takes a toll.
- "There are 2.3 million people in need of lifesaving assistance in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Humanitarian aid is available, but access has been extremely limited", said Amnesty International.

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#### **Links of interest**

<https://www.csis.org/events/online-event-new-us-policy-toward-africa-conversation-chairman-gregory-meeks-and-african>

<https://www.ft.com/content/4992e00e-557a-4c06-858b-e7e15bbf10ac>

<https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2777841/sudan-army-sends-reinforcements-border-ethiopia-after-3-merchants-kidnapped>