

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 75 - 03 February 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. The situation reports can be found [here](#).

Reported war situation (as confirmed per 02 February)

- Over 50,000 civilians have been killed in the Tigray war, write three opposition parties of the Tigray region in a joint press release. The three political parties urge the international community to intervene before a “humanitarian disaster of biblical proportion will become a gruesome reality.”
- Reported that 20,000 refugees are missing from two camps for Eritrean refugees in Tigray. The camps, Shemelba and Hitsats, were destroyed, said the United Nations.
- Independent news forum Ethio-Forum (31/1) reports that politician Yilekal Getnet said Ethiopia started the war in Tigray after an agreement had been made in secret between the PM Abiy, Essayas Afwerki and Ginbot 7. Yilka Getnet, is the leader of the opposition Ethiopian National Movement.
- Yilekal says that the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, the Mai Kadra massacre and the damage to the ENDF are not the cause of the war, but the consequences. He blames the Abiye administration for the political and security crisis and states that the agreement made in secret has played a major role.
- The statement issued by the three Tigrayan political parties states that the international community should ensure the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean troops in Tigray. The statement was signed by the Tigray Independence Party, the National Congress of Great Tigray and Salsay Weyane Tigray.
- The three political parties also urge an independent investigation into the conflict, dialogue, more humanitarian aid and media access to “cover what is happening in the region.”
- “Towns and villages have been demolished by blind artillery shelling. Our health and educational facilities have been looted and destroyed and, to the surprise of any sane mind, our religious institutions have also been attacked and their sacred possessions plundered,” the three parties added.
- Grandi, the UN’s High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that many refugees “were caught in crossfire, abducted and forced to return to Eritrea under duress by Eritrean forces”, citing testimony presented to him during a visit to refugee camps in Tigray.
- Grandi called on the Ethiopian government to do more to protect civilians in the Tigray region. “ I have a responsibility (..) to help minimise and eliminate the impact on civilians of this situation.”
- Grandi states the situation in Tigray is extremely grave and urgent support is necessary to prevent the situation worsening. “Our main priority is to gain access to deliver aid and protection.”
- AP reports that DX Open Network nonprofit found “further destruction at the Hitsats and Shimelba camps in recent weeks by unnamed armed groups, with humanitarian facilities among those targeted.”
- Ethio-Forum details that the Federal Attorney General of Ethiopia stated that reports of various organizations with regard to the number of people killed at Mai Kadra is inflated: “Most of the reports on the number of people killed in Mai Kadra shows exaggeration” said the Vice Federal Attorney General, Mr. Fekadu Tsega. “An examination made by the government tells that the number of people killed at Mai Kadra is far less than the reports published earlier by many media outlets.”

- Ethio-Forum reports that residents of Mekelle said that ENDF allied forces are confiscating their mobile phones. Especially residents found with pictures of Dr. Debretsion, other TPLF officials and flag of Tigray regional state in their mobile phones are intimidated and beaten whilst their phones are confiscated. According to the sources, Eritrean soldiers dressed in ENDF uniform are the main perpetrators of mobile phone confiscation.
- Ethio-Forum reports that many people in Tigray said the Interim government of Tigray is intimidating and forcing members of TPLF to change their membership to Prosperity Party and if they refuse, they will be killed. This is related to a letter from the head of the Tigray Prosperity Party, Mr. Nebiyu Sehul.
- Reported that mothers in labour are dying at home because of preventable childbirth complications. Even in Mekelle, mothers are dying. An example is two maternal deaths that happened in Mekelle (one in Adishumdihun and Endagebreale Kebelle 19) because of preventable birth complications, post-partum hemorrhage (PPH) and hypertension.
- It is reported that following the invasion of Ethiopian National forces in Mekelle, services collapsed in Ayder Referral Hospital (ARH), the highest level serving hospital of the region. Even women in labor could not be admitted for delivery at the hospital, as the military forces on duty denied women entry for delivery services in the hospital after 6:00PM (because of the curfew), referring to the declaration of emergency state law.
- Reported that almost all health care professionals (HCP) were left in the health facilities in Tigray, because of the fear for bombing and “massive killing” of civilians’ by the Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.
- In one instance, the duty skilled birth attendants/midwives left a laboring mother alone at the delivering room in Nebelet health center (HC), to save their own lives.
- Health professionals and eye-witnesses report different rape cases in Mekelle and other cities of Tigray. It is reported that many of the girls that come to the clinics are not only sexually assaulted and raped but they are also brutally beaten and bruised all over their bodies.
- Reported that in Humera, a young girl aged 13 was raped by Amhara militia while in her house after being separated from her parents. After being discovered by her family and on her way to the hospital they were all shot and killed before they could reach the hospital.
- A researcher comments that “looking at all the rape cases so far, the assaults are not random; they are a weapon of war.”

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 02 February)

- In a letter addressed to the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), the opposition party National Movement of Amhara (NaMA) demands an apology for hate messages displayed on banners at a rally organized in Oromia regional state in support of PM Abiy.

Reported Regional situation (as confirmed per 02 February)

- Yasser Abbas, Sudan’s Irrigation Minister, has warned Ethiopia against a planned second phase filling of GERD without signing an agreement with the stakeholders.

Reported International situation (as confirmed per 02 February)

- The UN Security Council will discuss the situation in Tigray behind closed doors on 3 Feb.
- In a phone call with PM Abiy, Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel “underscored the significance of a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Tigray region and of humanitarian supplies to the people affected”. Merkel added that “humanitarian aid organizations and media must be granted free access”.

Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best know/ledge 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 any additional information and corrections.

Links of interest

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/tigray-opposition-parties-assert-50000-plus-civilian-deaths/2021/02/02/cf39f904-6560-11eb-bab8-707f8769d785_story.html?click=https://t.co/04S1Er35SN
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55905108>

